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SLAVE-KING.

BY

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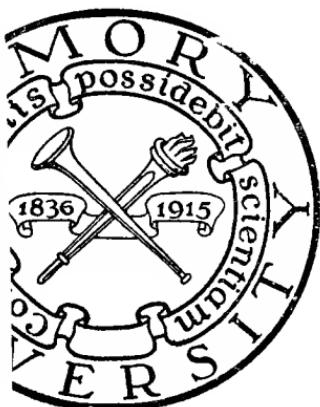
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LXXI.

THE SLAVE-KING.

THE SLAVE-KING:

A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

REBELLION OF THE NEGROS IN ST. DOMINGO.

ADAPTED FROM THE "BUG-JARGAL" OF

VICTOR HUGO.

LONDON:
SIMMS AND M'INTYRE,
PATERNOSTER ROW; AND DONEGALL STREET, BELFAST.

1852.

BOOK I.

THE SLAVE-KING.

CHAPTER I.

IN the army of the French Republic, Captain Leopold d'Auverney was a young man between twenty and thirty years of age, though considered much older by his brother officers. His calm features, reserved manners, and remarkable taciturnity, produced an unfavourable impression on the casual observer; but to those who knew him, D'Auverney was an object of interest and esteem. While conversation or amusement pleasantly wiled away the leisure hours of his companions, he alone sat motionless, brooding over his misfortunes, the severity of which was too plainly indicated in his furrowed brow and dejected aspect. Yet generosity and bravery were the distinguishing traits in his character. He delighted in performing acts of kindness, and, though a stranger to happiness himself, rejoiced in that of others. The eagerness with which he rushed into fight, and the animation which, on those occasions lighted up his usually dejected countenance, astonished even his companions in arms. Though frequently annoyed by his unsocial demeanour, they could not but respect him as a brave soldier and a warm-hearted friend.

His manifest love of danger and seeming disappointment when returned from successful warfare, at length

aroused their suspicions that he wished to terminate honourably a life which he could no longer enjoy, and a trifling incident soon placed this beyond doubt. D'Auverney was, on one occasion, nominated by the representatives of the people to the command of a brigade on the field of battle. This appointment he declined, assigning, as a reason, that he did not wish to be separated from his friend Serjeant Thadeus; but, on some days after, on returning unhurt from a dangerous expedition, he was heard to express his regret that he had refused promotion, as he would thereby have had the double chance of falling by the guillotine or the canouon of the enemy.

Mean while his almost unknown history, interesting from the many points of contrast in his character, afforded ample room for conjecture and inquiry. The only person from whom authentic information on the subject could be derived was Serjeant Thadeus, who had entered the regiment along with him, and was the only being, except his dog Hero, who possessed his warm and steady affection. Thadeus, however, uniformly limited himself to those portions of his friend's history which served to increase commiseration without gratifying curiosity. It was, notwithstanding, known in general that he had been one of the unfortunate sufferers in the servile revolution of St. Domingo in 1791. Persons of this description were, at that time, unhappily so numerous that their misfortunes ceased at length to excite much compassion; and D'Auverney was, in consequence, rather pitied on account of some aggravating circumstances which Thadeus sometimes hinted at than for his share in the common calamity.

The republican forces were, at that time, posted at a short distance from the English camp, and sundry skirmishes, with various success, were daily taking place between detached portions of the contending

armies. Among other combatants, Hero, Captain D'Auverney's dog, perhaps in emulation of his master, encountered a party of the enemy, by whom he was taken prisoner and conveyed to the English camp. The loss of his dog, for whom his affection was proverbial throughout the regiment, seemed to add new poignancy to the young officer's grief; and it may, therefore, be conceived with what joy he one evening beheld his favourite bounding towards him! In his first surprise he did not observe that Hero was lame; but, just as the shattered foot of the animal began to attract his attention, Serjeant Thadeus made his appearance with his right arm enveloped in the folds of his great coat.

“How came Hero back?” eagerly inquired D'Auverney. “Did he escape unassisted from the English camp?”

The worthy serjeant hesitated for a moment, as if to consider the most befitting mode of disburthening himself of his story, of which he was evidently full. At length he proceeded—

“With your leave, captain,” said he, “I did not fail to remark your sorrow at the loss of your favourite Hero. Indeed, I was scarcely less affected myself, for, as you know, he was my regular messmate. Poor fellow! I could have wept for him—wept! No, that is too much. I could not have wept for him; that is a catastrophe that occurred to me only once in my life.”

“Only once, my old friend?” said D'Auverney, with a melancholy smile, “and no doubt on an interesting and important occasion.”

“On an interesting occasion! Alas, captain! when could I have wept but on that unhappy evening when I gave the command to fire on Bug-Jargal?”

D'Auverney started: an expression of agony swept across his naturally calm countenance; he paced the

floor for some time with an agitated step, but gradually recovering his self-command, his cheek grew as pale and cold as ever, and he stood still.

Mean while Thadeus had remained a silent, though not an unfeeling, spectator of his master's emotion. "Well I remember, captain," continued he, for the subject seemed to possess a kind of fascination for poor Thadeus: "Well I remember that fatal evening when Bug-Jargal, faint and exhausted, reached the place of execution just in time to save the lives of his ten companions. Though free himself, and thus beyond our controul, he was too generous to permit them to suffer in his stead. In vain the poor fellows insisted upon dying; he nobly determined that they should live. Hero was there; he understood his master's danger from the position he had taken, and just as I gave the fatal sign he almost strangled me."

D'Auverney, who had listened with unwonted serenity, made no remark; but when Thadeus had concluded, endeavoured to recall his attention to his question regarding the restoration of the dog, which the excited feelings of the old man had caused him to overlook. While doing so, he remarked for the first time, that the serjeant kept his right arm studiously concealed beneath his great coat, and on inquiring the reason, Thadeus, with some awkward gestures, and in evident embarrassment, confessed that the limb was seriously hurt. D'Auverney's interest in his serjeant became instantly apparent; he sprung from his seat in consternation, repeating the words of Thadeus, and demanding impatiently to see his arm. The serjeant proceeded to remove the bandages which covered it, in which D'Auverney tenderly assisted him. His anxiety increased when he saw that the arm of his faithful follower was dreadfully lacerated by a pistol shot, and he asked, almost reproachfully, for an explanation.

“The story is easily told,” replied Thadeus. “I have already said that I remarked your grief when Hero was carried off by some English troopers, and this morning I determined to restore to you Bug-Jargal’s dog, even if I should perish in the attempt. Having given some necessary orders to your servant, Matheld, in anticipation of a general engagement to-morrow, I quickly departed from the camp, armed only with my sword. I made the best of my way to the English entrenchments, but had not reached the nearest, when I observed a group of English soldiers in a little wood on my left. Being desirous of ascertaining what was going on, I advanced softly into the wood; and as the attention of the soldiers was wholly engrossed, I posted myself near them without being perceived. I had scarcely taken up my position, when, to my infinite surprise, the first object which attracted my attention, was our own Hero tied to a tree. I had just time further to observe, that two Englishmen were engaged in furious combat; and from the gestures and shoutings of their companions, to conclude, that they fought for the possession of Hero; when the animal observing me, made so sudden and violent a spring, that his cord snapped, and the next moment I was overwhelmed with his embraces. This manœuvre did not pass unnoticed. The soldiers, startled at the noise, instantly turned round to ascertain the cause. No time was to be lost; I plunged into the wood, followed by Hero; the balls whistled around us, and I could distinctly hear the cries of our pursuers, as they followed close in our rear: ‘French dog!’ said they, among other things; well, he was a French dog, what then? The wood, however, favoured our escape, and we arrived in safety at the border, when a new danger presented itself. Two English soldiers opposed my path, and attacked me furiously. By a dexterous plunge of my sword I

disabled one of them, and might have been an equal match for the other, had not the coward fired his pistol, and reduced my sword arm to the state in which you see it. 'French dog,' however, supplied my place; he leaped with a fierce howl on the Englishman, and both rolled on the ground. The struggle was furious and protracted; but at length I heard the death-moan of the soldier. We met with no further adventure on our return to the camp; but I cannot tell you, captain, how much I regret the prospect of being prevented from taking part in the battle expected to-morrow. But God's will be done!"

When Thadeus had finished his recital, the countenance of D'Auverney exhibited a variety of conflicting emotions. He was angry at his serjeant for risking his life on so foolish an enterprise, while at the same time he could not but admire the motives which had prompted him. He at first attempted to expostulate; but when Thadeus feelingly reminded him that it was no ordinary dog he had striven to save, but Hero, the dog of Bug-Jargal, he was instantly pacified, and affectionately shook the hand of the warm-hearted veteran.

No remark seems necessary on the adventure related by Thadeus, except that he appears to have too hastily taken for granted that the English cry of 'French dog' was intended for Hero. Many on the contrary, are of opinion that the epithet was applied to the worthy serjeant himself; but this question is left for the decision of the learned.

D'Auverney immediately ordered the surgeon to dress the serjeant's wound with care, and afterwards to report the state of the patient. He then gave such other directions as he thought might tend to increase the comfort of Thadeus during his confinement; and everything being arranged to his satisfaction, he at length left him to repose.

The eve of battle is not exclusively devoted to solemn thought, even by reflective minds. The common danger draws still closer the bonds of common sympathy; and men who had been kept asunder like beings of different races, by the various prejudices of rank or habit, may be seen mingling together as friends or brothers. Instead of retiring each to the solitude of his own chamber, to meditate in sadness or remorse, as the case may happen, on the current of that history which perhaps is to terminate to-morrow, and to call back again the vanished dreams of youth, and fill the vacant space around with the phantoms of memory, all hasten to a common rendezvous. The heart is open that is usually shut by selfishness: the lips unclosed that are glued together by pride or habitual reserve. Wine sparkles on the table, not because it is germane to the occasion, but because it is a symbol of sociality; and the soul softens and expands under the influence of the magic juice. The conversation, however, is all of the past, for this is essentially a festival of memory. The devoted soldier cannot see beyond the morrow; the smoke of the battle is between. On this occasion D'Auverney was more open than usual to receive the impressions of the hour. The chord was yet vibrating which Thadeus had touched so rudely. The consummation of his fate appeared to his wearied glance to be only a few hours distant; and he saw by his side the forms and faces of many of those who were to accompany him into the land of spirits. Their talk was a chronicle of the past, of brief joys, and perished hopes; and each in his turn

— called up to view

The spectres whom no exorcism can bind:
The cold, the changed, perchance the dead, anew—
The mourned, the loved, the lost: too many, yet how few!

A pause at length occurred in the conversation, and all looked at D'Auverney; a change had taken place in his expression. Something there had been in those calm sad features, which repressed inquiry, even while stimulating curiosity. This was now gone. "My friend," said one of his brother officers, suddenly laying his hand upon his shoulder, "you look as if you had heard us with some interest. Will you permit us to hear *you* in turn?"

D'Auverney smiled faintly.

"Comrades," said he, "there are some incidents in the story of my life which I cannot speak of even now, without extreme pain. I have no right, however, to refuse your request. If you find the narrative long and uninteresting, remember you have brought the visitation upon yourselves; if, on the contrary, you discover in it some of those germs of thought which, when they vegetate, enrich the mind, receive them as a legacy from your friend."

"A legacy?"

"As it may happen: to morrow—— No matter."

"Go on, go on!"

CHAPTER II.

AT a very early period of my life, my father, with the view of promoting certain projects, sent me to the island of St. Domingo, where one of my uncles was a flourishing planter. His estates were of great extent, and were situated in the plain of Acul, near Cape Francois. The Plain of the Cape, the name which this tract of land usually received, was distinguished from all the surrounding districts by the salubrity of its climate and the fertility of its soil. It has now, unfortunately, acquired celebrity of a very different kind, and the mind cannot help contrasting the former exuberant profusion of its productions, with the desolation of which it is now the scene.

My uncle, the proprietor of the greater part of this fertile district, was, like many of the planters, a man of an uncourteous and overbearing deportment. The long use and abuse of absolute power over his slaves, who amounted in number to eight hundred, had produced their legitimate effect, in destroying all the finer feelings of his nature. He seemed quite insensible to the sufferings of his slaves, and uniformly punished with the utmost rigour the slightest infringement of his arbitrary laws. Accustomed to obey no will but his own, he could not brook restraint or contradiction of any kind. In his household arrangements my uncle resembled very much a feudal chief of ancient times. He lived in a style of almost

princely magnificence. His numerous household slaves were dressed after the European manner; and that no mark of greatness might be wanting, he adopted as his jester, a slave named Habibrah, who had been presented to him by Lord Effingham, governor of Jamaica. His choice of a personage of this description was certainly singularly happy.

Habibrah was not a negro, nor yet, to speak correctly, a mulatto.* As to stature, he was literally a dwarf, and his figure, on the whole, was so deformed, that a stranger could scarcely look at him without shuddering. To those, however, whom habit had reconciled to his appearance, Habibrah was an unceasing subject for mirth. His body was short, but of amazing bulk, and was supported on limbs which, to judge from appearance, were quite inadequate for their burden. To the huge head, which reposed on his short neck, were attached a pair of ears which an ass, in want of such a commodity, might reasonably enough have disputed with the owner. It was even

* According to the system of the exact Franklin, the colour of Habibrah was composed of twenty-four to thirty-two parts white, and ninety-six to a hundred and four black. This colour, Victor Hugo tells us, is called griffe by the French; but at the outset of so parti-coloured a narration, it may be as well to make the English reader acquainted with the origin and names of the various classes.

The mixture of the two pure races, white and black, or European and negro, produces the *mulatto*.

The *quadroon* proceeds from the white and mulatto.

The *griffe* from the mulatto and negress. The female griffe is the *griffeno*.

The *sacatra* from the griffe and negress

The *marabout* from the quadroon and negress, the mulatto and griffeno, or the mulatto and sacatra.

The mulatto, it should be observed, is the result of the union of pure white and black blood; and is the least handsome both in feature and hair of all the combinations.

said by some of his comrades, that on needful occasions they supplied the place of a pocket-handkerchief. The countenance of Habibrah was not less singular than the rest of his person; for he possessed the faculty of changing at pleasure the aspect of his features, to which his ever-varying humour no doubt contributed.

This slave was a great favourite with my uncle; while the rest were groaning under hard labour and cruel usage, his single employment was to attend his master, and defend him with a large fan from the mosquitoes and other troublesome insects. At table he generally sat at my uncle's feet, and received from him a share of his own favourite viands.

His gaiety frequently was uncontrollable, and was heightened in its effect by numberless whimsical gestures and strange contortions of countenance. He seldom failed of success in diverting my uncle (which, however, on some occasions, was no easy matter), and at length became almost his constant attendant.

So much description is necessary for Habibrah, as he will frequently be introduced in the course of my story. For my own part I hated and despised him. I could not endure to see such a creature, by the basest flattery, exerting so much influence over my uncle. His haughty deportment towards his fellow slaves increased my indignation. He was never known to intercede on their behalf, although there can be no doubt his mediation would frequently have proved successful. I even heard that on one occasion he exhorted my uncle to employ unwonted severity towards an unfortunate offender. The slaves, however, did not appear to dislike him. I have seen him at times condescend to stalk about their humble dwellings, adorned, or rather disfigured, if such a thing was possible, by a large tri-cornered hat, hung round with little silver bells, and covered with hiero-

glyphics, and various mystical symbols. On these occasions the slaves always preserved a respectful distance, and seemed to regard him with a kind of awe for which I was at a loss to account, till one day I heard some of them exclaim, on observing him, "Hush! there is the Ouanga."^{*}

I had, happily, little connection with Habibrah; I seldom thought of him but when he intruded himself on my notice, and I forgot him as soon as he disappeared. Even the splendour of my uncle's establishment, which it might naturally be supposed would captivate youthful feelings, was unheeded by me. My heart was wholly engrossed by a treasure, in my estimation, far more valuable than all the rest of his wealth: this was his young and beautiful daughter. Accustomed to look upon her as my future wife, even in that early boyhood, when she was as yet my sister, there had grown between us an attachment which partook at once of fraternal devotion, exalted passion, and conjugal confidence. The gay and golden days of youth rolled over us in unheeded and rapid succession. No care distracted my bosom, and if a cloud, perchance, overspread my brow, it was instantly dissipated by the light of Maria's smile. We were constantly in each other's company, delighting in our mutual happiness, glorying in the pride of our youth, and looking forward with ecstasy to our approaching union. It was frequently our employment to intercede with my uncle for his suffering slaves; and although our mediation was too frequently unavailing, yet on these occasions Maria adopted many of those gentle and hidden arts in which woman so peculiarly excels. Our marriage had long been determined on by our respective parents, and I anticipated it as the

* Our author uses the Jamaica expression *Obi*, which is unknown in the French islands.

consummation of all earthly happiness. Visions of beauty and delight constantly attended my pillow, and during my waking hours my warm and youthful imagination was never wearied in ‘gilding’ even the ‘refined gold’ of my dreams. Various circumstances lent their aid in consolidating the fabric of my visionary hopes. I had hitherto never known misfortune, and now I beheld myself surrounded by all the advantages which wealth and rank can bestow. I did not once believe it possible that the wishes of our parents and our own could be disappointed; no day differed from another in the round of pleasure with which it was fraught; the ever gay and glorious aspect of external nature seemed to respond to my inward feelings, and the bright sky above my head never warned me that a cloud might one day bury me in darkness.

My marriage with Maria was fixed by my uncle for the 22d of August, 1791, the day on which I should attain my twentieth year; and as this auspicious period drew near, I seemed to forget that I was an ordinary mortal. I neglected everything that was not connected with the engrossing objects of my thoughts, and it may easily be imagined, took no part in the political disputes which had agitated the colony for upwards of two years: in fact, I cannot be said to have had any political opinions at all. I knew, indeed, that burning jealousy and angry disputations divided the provincial assembly of the north, which sat at Cape François, and the colonial or general assembly at Port au Prince; but into the precise nature of these disputes I seldom inquired, and just understood so much of the matter as to be convinced of their injurious effects on the prosperity of the colony.

My prejudices, for they deserve no better name, were of course enlisted on the side of the provincial assembly, of which my uncle was a member. The

decree of the National Assembly of France, dated May 15th, 1771, by which they admitted free mulattoes to an equal participation of political rights with the whites, was the first thing which attracted my attention particularly to politics; and like many other young men, my pride was deeply wounded at the thought of being reduced to a level with mulattoes, in a country where colour had hitherto been the distinction of rank. One evening, at a ball given by the governor, a number of young planters were loud in their disapprobation of the obnoxious statute. The mulattoes, whose society was at all times shunned by the whites, could not now be endured, and I was not slower than the rest in expressing my opinion. At that inauspicious moment I observed a rich planter coming forward, who, although boasting himself a white man, was always disliked by the whites on account of his equivocal colour. I called out aloud, haughtily desiring him to stop, and refrain from entering into a society in which not one of his complexion was yet permitted to mingle. It was not exactly the man's colour, however, that prompted me to this insolence, for I was piqued besides at the attention he usually paid to Maria; and I believed that at the time I addressed him he was about to be guilty of the presumption of dancing with her. My folly did not pass unpunished: he demanded satisfaction for the affront, which I could not refuse, and we fought, and were both wounded.

Mean while, as the new era of my happiness approached, the agitation of the colony increased, and the disputes between the whites and the free mulattoes were daily becoming more alarming. An ominous cloud overcast the political horizon, and all were anxiously expecting the time when it would burst in thunder over their heads.

An insurrection of the slaves, however, was never

once contemplated by the most sagacious. This degraded class was too much despised to be feared; and it was from the mulattoes alone that danger was apprehended.

Though in the midst of all this turmoil, I was not affected by it; and indeed, was unconscious almost of its existence, so completely was I engrossed in the contemplation of my union with Maria. Nothing had hitherto occurred which I could, by possibility, exaggerate into an obstacle to my marriage. But in the beginning of August, as I was indulging in fond anticipations of the future, a circumstance took place which, though trivial in itself, caused me great uneasiness and anxiety from the mystery which attended it.

My uncle, though a hard master, was a fond father, and left no means unemployed which could contribute to the amusement or happiness of his daughter. For her recreation he caused a little bower to be erected on the bank of a beautiful river which meandered through his plantations; and Maria was in the habit of resorting daily to this sylvan retreat to enjoy the varied scenery of the river, and inhale the fragrant breezes so grateful to the inhabitants of the torrid zone. Every morning it was my delightful employment to prepare her bower for the reception of my beloved, by adorning it with garlands of the choicest flowers. Little did I imagine, in these auspicious hours, that aught could disturb the tranquillity of beings like us, born apparently for happiness and for one another.

But I was soon undeceived. One morning Maria retired, as usual, to her pavilion, and was struck with surprise at its unwonted appearance. The flowers which I had selected and arranged with so much care lay scattered and destroyed upon the ground, and were replaced by large bouquets of wild marigolds tastefully arranged along the sides of the bower, and

decorating the seat which its mistress usually occupied.

As she stood gazing in surprise upon this phenomenon, the sweet strains of a guitar, accompanied by a man's voice, broke upon her ear, singing the low melodious notes of a Spanish song, in which she was only able to hear distinctly her own name. Maria was not gifted with much fortitude, and she immediately obeyed her first impulse to fly; and although dreading pursuit from her audacious admirer, she reached the house without interruption.

Those only who have experienced the ardour of youthful love, can judge of my indignation when informed of this little incident by the pale and breathless girl. The *sang-mêlé* with whom I had fought, was the first object of suspicion that occurred to me; but at any rate I was convinced that, if my rival was really in earnest, he would soon afford me an opportunity of punishing his presumption; and in the mean time, I besought Maria to dismiss her terror and rely on my protection. Disturbed with the thousand fears of love, I sallied forth on the night of the same day, armed with my dagger, and concealed myself among the sugar-canæs near the part of the house in which Maria's room was situated.

I did not wait in vain. Towards midnight, when the whole plantation was sunk in repose, some soft and melancholy notes of a guitar warned me of the approach of the enemy; and in surprise no less than anger, I sprung from my hiding-place, and crashing the slender stalks of the canæs beneath my feet, was in a moment under Maria's window, whence the sounds proceeded. In that moment my sword-arm was seized with an overpowering grasp, and in the next, I saw my own poignard brandished over my head, and a pair of brilliant eyes darting down on me an expression of unspeakable triumph, while a

double row of white teeth, glittering in the darkness, opened to let these words escape—“*Te tengo, te tengo!*”*

Still more astonished than terrified, I struggled vainly against my formidable adversary, and already the steel had penetrated my clothing, when Maria, alarmed by the guitar, the tumult and the voices, appeared suddenly at the window. She shrieked as she recognised my voice and saw the gleam of the dagger, and the sound seemed to paralyze the arm of my antagonist. He stopped, as if struck by enchantment, pressed feebly and hesitatingly the weapon against my breast, and then dashed it suddenly upon the ground—

“No,” said he, speaking this time in French, “no, she would weep too much!” and having uttered these strange words, he plunged among the trees; and before I could collect my senses, stunned with the sudden and unequal strife, no sound nor vestige remained, either of his presence or retreat.

I continued lying on the ground in a kind of stupor, from which I felt myself at length roused by some of the domestics whom Maria had summoned to my relief. When I opened my eyes I saw that the paleness of death had spread over her lovely countenance, but by degrees she resumed her composure. I had, at first, considerable difficulty in narrating the particulars of my adventure, the suddenness of which had deprived me of all self-possession; but when my faculties were fully restored, my eager inquiries were directed towards the flight of my rival, of whom after much useless search, no traces could be discovered. I then employed myself in conjecturing who this mysterious serenader could be, whose love for Maria was so disinterestedly pure, that rather than cause her a

* I have thee, I have thee!

tear or a pang, he restored to her arms so formidable an obstacle to his passion as myself. He could not be the planter with whom I had quarrelled, although my suspicions had rested at first on this individual, for my opponent far surpassed him in stature and strength. Besides, he was naked from the waist upwards, and only the slaves appeared in such costume in the colony. But a slave! the idea was folly. How could I entertain the revolting thought of acknowledging a rival in a slave? Besides, no slave could possess that superior mind which his actions and sentiments evinced; and even his cultivated taste for music belied the supposition. After tormenting myself with fruitless conjectures, I resolved at length to wait as patiently as I might for another opportunity of discovering my mysterious rival.

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning my uncle was made acquainted with my nocturnal adventure, and his astonishment and indignation were extreme. Like myself, he could not brook the supposition that the unknown admirer of his daughter was a slave, but at once concluded that, to prevent recognition, he had adopted that disguise.

My uncle now took all the precautions which an anxious mind could devise for foiling the hidden enemy. Maria's walks were circumscribed; additional guards posted round the extensive enclosures; no stranger was permitted to enter without specifying his business; and in fine, I received instructions, very unnecessary indeed, to watch with renewed vigilance over my betrothed, and accompany her in all her walks till the 22d of August, the day of our nuptials.

My uncle personally was unable to exercise any superintendence over his daughter, from the multiplicity of his engagements, both with his own affairs and those of the colony, which now wore a threatening aspect; and Maria, having lost her mother in infancy, had no female guardian except her old nurse, whose faithful and assiduous attention supplied in some measure the place of maternal care. Apart, therefore, from other and more tender considerations,

I believed it my duty to counsel and protect this lovely and lonely girl.

Some days after the incident above related, when Maria's fears had subsided, I resolved to revisit her favourite retreat, and prepare it anew for her reception. I tore down the hateful marigolds, and tossed them into the river; and after removing everything that showed the hand of a stranger, and restoring the bower to its usual appearance, I decorated it with flowers more gaily than ever. I did not tell Maria what I had done, but led her as if accidentally to the spot. She was accompanied by her nurse, and I was armed with a loaded carbine.

On approaching the bower I remained behind to witness the expression of surprise which I expected its gay appearance would draw forth from her. There was, indeed, surprise in her face as she looked, and not only surprise, but an expression of pique which I had rarely witnessed.

“Why bring me here?” said she. “Is it only to look at these ugly marigolds, or to admire the miracle of their remaining till now as bright and fresh as ever?”

I almost imagined myself in a dream. The time that had elapsed was hardly sufficient to shift the scenes in a theatre, and yet, as if by magic, I now saw before me the bower of the unknown instead of my own. The flowers I had arranged so carefully were strewn upon the floor as a carpet for the foot, and the marigolds of my rival waved triumphant in their high places.

“But why so sad?” asked Maria, resuming her wonted tone; “what else did you expect than to see the bower just as we left it? Come! a few minutes' hard labour will set all right, and I shall begin myself. There goes one, two, three: fie, Leopold! are you too lazy to work?”

I seized mechanically a handful of the odious flowers; but at the moment my ear caught the faint tinkling of a guitar at a little distance: the same soft and melancholy notes that had awakened my fury the night before.

“Do not stir,” whispered Maria, grasping my arm with the presence of mind peculiar to her sex; “he will probably sing, and thus discover himself.”

The next moment we heard a low and plaintive yet manly voice, mingling with the tones of the guitar. The song was a Spanish romance, and every word sunk so deeply into my soul, that although my memory is not naturally tenacious, and although for many years my life has been a continued scene of misfortune, I still remember distinctly most of the expressions.

Oh! why that faltering step, dear maid, and that averted eye,
 And that half shriek of woman’s fear whene’er thou deem’st me nigh?
 What terror to thy gentle breast the plaintive accents bring,
 Of one who only knows to love, to suffer, and to sing!

When wandering in the cocoa shade, if chance thy form I see
 Glide sudden through the silent grove, what fear, what joy for me!
 My dazzled sight grows dim, my conscious heart beats wild and high:
 I feel as if some spirit-shape had passed before mine eye!

Whene’er thy voice upon mine ear doth fall, to meet the strain
 My heart leaps up, and trembling, breathes the music o’er again:
 Music, more sweet than the sweet birds of my own country sing,
 The land where I was once a man, a freeman, and a king!

Yes, free! yes, king! alas, young maid! my freedom and my throne,
 My country—all could I forget, remembering thee alone!
 All, all! ay, even revenge, though now at hand the hour of
 fate,
 When ripens that sweet-bitter fruit, so sudden yet so late!

The voice had sung these stanzas in a low and hesitating tone, all but the concluding couplet, into which the singer threw an expression of smothered fierceness which was almost appalling. The strain continued—

Maria! like some graceful palm that near the fountain dwells,
 And sees her own fair form enshrined within its mirrored
 cells;
 Even so in thy young lover's eyes thou look'st, and canst but
 sec
 The image of thy love and grace reflected back to thee.

But ah! the savage whirlwind lurks beyond the desert calm,
 And sullen eyes that happy pair, the fountain and the palm;
 He rushes o'er his arid bed, and clasps the victim round;
 The waters shrink and dry, the tree falls withered to the
 ground!

Tremble, oh, radiant girl! lest aught thy paradise deform,
 And round thee thou canst only see the desert and the storm;
 The storm through which the love thou spurn'st, the Katha's
 wing might be,
 And lead thee o'er the dismal waste, to safety and to me.

Why, cruel, wilt thou thus reject the homage that I bring?
 Why thus disdain the love that fires the bosom of a king?
 True, I am black as night, and thou as radiant as the day;
 Yet morn and eve their union bless, more beautiful than
 they.*

* The original is subjoined for the credit of Victor Hugo:—

Pourquoi me fuis-tu, Maria, pourquoi me-fuis tu, jeunc fille?

A deep sigh prolonged on the trembling chords of the guitar accompanied the last words. I was no longer master of myself. "King! black! slave!" a thousand incoherent ideas, awakened by the inexpli-

pourquoi cette terreur quand tu m'entends? Je suis en effet bien formidable! je sais aimer, souffrir et chanter!

Lorsqu'à travers les tiges élancées des cocotiers de la rivière je vois glisser ta forme légère et pure, un éblouissement trouble ma vue, O Maria! et je crois voir passer un esprit!

Et si j'entends, O Maria! les accents enchantés qui s'échappent de ta bouche comme une mélodie, il me semble que mon cœur vient palpiter dans mon oreille, et mêle un bourdonnement plaintif à ta voix harmonieuse.

Helas! ta voix est plus douce pour moi que le chant même des jeunes oiseaux qui battent de l'aile dans le ciel, et qui viennent du côté de ma patrie;

De ma patrie où j'étais roi, de ma patrie où j'étais libre!

Libre et roi, jeune fille! J'oublierais tout cela pour toi; j'oublierais tout, royaume, famille, devoirs, vengeance; oui, jusqu'à la vengeance, quoique le moment soit bientôt venu de cueillir ce fruit amer et délicieux qui mûrit si tard!

O Maria! tu ressembles au beau palmier, svelte et doucement balancé sur sa tige, et tu te mires dans l'œil de ton jeune amant comme le palmier dans l'eau transparente de la fontaine.

Mais, ne le sais-tu pas? il y a quelque fois au fond du désert un ouragan jaloux du bonheur de la fontaine aimée; il accourt, et l'air et le sable se mêlent sous le vol de ses lourdes ailes; il enveloppe l'arbre et la source d'un tourbillon de feu; et la fontaine se dessèche, et le palmier sent se crisper sous l'haleine de mort le cercle vert de ses feuilles qu'avait la majesté d'une couronne et la grâce d'une chevelure.

Tremble, O blanche fille d'Hispaniola! tremble que tout ne soit bientôt plus autour de toi qu'un ouragan et qu'un désert!

cable song I had just heard, whirled through my brain; a burning thirst of vengeance took possession of my soul; and seizing my carbine, I sprang from the side of the trembling girl, and rushed like a madman out of the bower. Maria in vain endeavoured to seize me. In an instant I had plunged into the wood from whence the voice proceeded. I traversed it in all directions. I thrust my carbine into the bushes; made the circle of the large trees; stirred from top to bottom the long grass. Nothing visible: nothing, nothing! This useless search, added to my useless reflections on the romance, mingled confusion with my anger. This insolent rival, it seemed, was to escape from the grasp at once of my arm and of my mind. At the moment I was roused from my reverie by the sound of bells, and springing round, the dwarf Habibrali stood before me.

“Good day, master,” said he, bending respectfully, yet his eye raised obliquely as he appeared to remark, with an undefinable expression of malice and triumph, the anxiety it must have read on my brow.

“Speak!” cried I, abruptly; “saw you any one in this wood?”

“Yes; you, *señor mio*,” replied he, calmly.

“And you heard no voice?” rejoined I. The slave hesitated for a moment, as if considering what he should reply. My blood boiled.

“Quick,” said I, “miserable being!” He fixed

alors tu regretteras l'amour qui eût pu te conduire vers moi, comme le joyeux Katha, l'oiseau de salut, guide à travers les sables d'Afrique le voyageur à la citerne.

Et pourquoi repousserais-tu mon amour, Maria? Je suis roi, et mon front s'élève au dessus de tous les fronts humains. Tu es blanche et je suis noir; mais le jour a besoin de s'unir à la nuit pour enfanter l'aurore et le couchant, qui sont plus beaux que lui!

boldly upon mine his two great eyes, as round as a tiger cat's.

“*Que quiere decir usted* * by a voice, my master?” replied he. “I hear voices at this moment all around me: I hear the voice of the birds, and the voice of the water, and the voice of the wind, whispering among the leaves —” Irritated to the last degree, I shook him violently, and thundered out—

“You are my uncle's fool, sir, not mine: answer me in a word, or the next voice you hear shall be that of my carbine discharged at your head! Did you hear any one singing a Spanish song in this wood?” Not a whit moved by my violence, Habibrah coolly replied—

“Yes, my young master, I did, and I will tell you all about it.” In expectation that the mystery which had hitherto enveloped my unknown rival was now about to be revealed, I became more composed, and Habibrah, speaking slowly and deliberately, and pausing frequently, as if to recollect himself, began his story:—

“I was walking, master,” said he, “on the borders of the wood, listening to what the silver bells of my gorra babbled in my ear, when all on a sudden the wind began to join to this concert some words of a tongue, the first that I myself lisped when my age was reckoned by months and not by years, and when my mother slung me on her back with little bands of red and yellow linen; when, though little, I was not a dwarf, and though a child was not a fool.” I never dreamed before that Habibrah had one spark of feeling in his composition; and agreeably surprised by this burst of nature, I heard him the more patiently; but the recollection of my own situation returning, I desired him to cut his story short, and tell me who

* What do you mean?

the singer was; and by way of hastening the disclosure, I held up my purse, and promised him ten times as much as it contained, on my curiosity being satisfied. The sight of the purse changed the fickle humour of the poor fool: he snatched it from me, and opening it with delight, counted over the contents. “*Diez bolzas* better than this! but *demonio!* that would make a full fanega of good crowns of the image *del rey Louis Quinze*, as much as would have sown the field of the Grenadian magician, Altornino, who knew the art of making the *buenos doblones* grow! But never mind, my young master, I am coming to the fact. Do you remember, *senor*, the last words of the song?

True, I am black as night, and thou art radiant as the day,
Yet morn and eve their union bless, more beautiful than they.

Now, if this song be true, the griffe Habibrah, your humble servant, born of a negress and a white man, is more beautiful than you, *senorite de amor*. I am the produce of the union of day and night; I am the morn and eve of which the song speaks; therefore, I am more beautiful than you, *si usted quiere*: more beautiful than a white;” and the dwarf finished his digression with loud shouts of laughter.

“But what has all this foolery to do,” inquired I, “with my question about the individual who sung?”

“It is quite to the point,” replied Habibrah, without hesitation. “Do you not see that all this foolery, as you call it, can only be the offspring of the brain of some fool like myself? The ten purses are mine fairly!”

Not understanding the conclusion to which he had arrived, and my patience being quite exhausted, I determined to bear with him no longer, and was about to inflict a summary punishment on his audacity and

obstinacy, when a fearful shriek, proceeding from Maria's bower, arrested my arm. Struck with a new terror, I rushed back to the spot, which I reached gasping and trembling. My beloved was, indeed, threatened by danger, but of a very different nature from that which my imagination had conjured up; and from this she was defended by an arm far more powerful than my own.

An enormous alligator from the river had thrust his huge head through the foliage of the bower; his jaws were wide open, and as by degrees he insinuated his body into the gap, he made repeated darts at a young negro of gigantic stature, who, with one arm supported the fainting girl, and with the other, as he found opportunity, struck a long iron agricultural instrument into the open mouth of the monster.

My appearance at the door of the pavilion restored Maria to her senses. She uttered a cry of joy, and breaking from the arms of her protector, threw herself into mine. At this moment the negro turned round, and crossing his arms on his swelling breast, and fixing on my betrothed a look of despair, remained immovable, without appearing to observe that the alligator was on the point of seizing him. Another moment would have decided his fate; but, moved by a sudden impulse of gratitude to the preserver of Maria, I laid her down on the knees of her nurse, approached the monster, and discharged my carbine into his throat.

The animal recoiled as if struck by thunder. His quenched eyes and bleeding jaws opened and shut several times convulsively, and at last he threw himself upon his back with a sound as if shuddering, and his unclean spirit 'went down to the earth.' The negro, whose life I had thus saved, looked calmly at the dying struggles of the monster; he then fixed his eyes upon the ground, from whence he raised them slowly to the face of Maria, who had thrown her arms

round my neck, and leant her head upon my shoulder—

“*Porque le has matado?*” said he to me, in a voice which appeared to express something more than despair; and without awaiting my answer, he walked away, and entering the wood, disappeared.

Some minutes elapsed before the confusion of mind, produced by this singular scene, both in Maria and myself, was altogether dispelled. As we walked homewards, I endeavoured to extract from her the details of her adventure, and, in particular, inquired in what manner such opportune assistance had reached her.

Her deliverer was, without doubt, a slave; for the coarse drawers, which were his only clothing, showed at once that he belenged to the lowest class of the colony.

“He must be one of my uncle’s negroes,” said Maria, “and was probably at work near the river at the moment when the appearance of the alligator drew from me the shriek which you heard. All I know is, that at the same moment he stood between me and death!”

“From which side did he come?” demanded I.

“From the side opposite to that from which the voice of the stranger proceeded, and by which you entered the wood.”

The reply deranged, in some measure, the process by which I had anxiously begun to trace a relationship between the Spanish words addressed to me by the negro as he withdrew, and the romance which had been sung in the same language by my unknown rival.

There was something so grotesque, so extravagant, in the idea which this relationship presented, that I almost laughed, and yet, at the moment, I felt that I grew pale. A negro, a half-naked slave, a human beast of burden! was it from his mouth that the voice

of love proceeded? Love Maria! the thought was ridiculous; and would have been merely ridiculous, but for the humiliating coincidences that fixed themselves upon my attention. The amazing strength and gigantic stature of the negro I found to correspond with those of my nocturnal foe. His dress also, so far as I could observe, was the same. The song was Spanish, and so were the words which he had spoken after disarming me on the night of our combat. The singer, as the verses declared, was a black, which farther corresponded: but this black was a king!

Here I was puzzled, but I soon reasoned myself out of the difficulty by calling to mind his appearance in the bower, with which I had been much struck. His forehead was more capacious than that of any African I had hitherto seen. His eyes sparkled like stars, and his beautiful teeth contrasted finely with the shining jet of his skin. His body and limbs were handsome and well-proportioned; and altogether his aspect was stern and commanding, differing widely from the tameness and servility of the other slaves. Putting these and many other circumstances together, I inwardly confessed that the negro might well have been a king. After having, by a lengthened train of reasoning, come to the conclusion that he was, indeed, my mysterious rival, I determined to punish his presumption.

Several doubts, however, in the course of the day suggested themselves, and I began to think it possible that I might not have weighed correctly all the circumstances. It, for instance, occurred to me, that although this slave had certainly spoken some words in Spanish, the circumstance was not sufficient to establish his identity with the singer of the Spanish song; for many of these slaves, who had been long residents of the colony, spoke the Spanish language, or, at least, mixed it up with their own jargon. I

also thought it extremely improbable, if not impossible, that any negro, whatever his original condition might have been, could compose such a song, many of the sentiments and images of which were not unworthy of the most refined European. His seeming indifference to life, which I had imagined to proceed from despair of possessing his master's daughter, whom he adored, I now thought might naturally be accounted for by his own degraded and forlorn condition. His opportune appearance at the bower to me was no very inexplicable thing: the supposition of Maria was nothing more than natural, that he had been working in the neighbourhood, and had heard her scream. In short, I rebutted every one of my former arguments which had seemed to me so conclusive, and remained in as great uncertainty as ever as to the identity of my hidden foe. But still Maria was saved, and I was happy.

After much deliberation I came to the resolution of searching for the slave, and of either punishing or rewarding him as circumstances should dictate; but when I mentioned my purpose to Maria, the bare idea of punishing her generous preserver, shocked her beyond description.

“ Do you really love me, Leopold?” said she, “ and yet speak of punishing the man who saved me from death! You know that if you accuse him to my father, who holds the lives of his slaves in such slight estimation, death—yes, a dreadful death, will be his doom. And oh, Leopold! is it possible that you can entertain the thought of murdering my deliverer? ” I was overwhelmed with confusion, and hung down my head unable to encounter the glance of Maria, or to admire her countenance, at all times lovely, but now lighted up with the flash of generous enthusiasm.

We hastened to my uncle's, and told him, with little circumlocution, that to one of his slaves he owed

the life of his daughter. Gratitude swelled even *his* bosom, and I abhorred myself at the thought that I had permitted an absurd revenge to find a place in mine. He promised to grant the slave his freedom; and I determined to furnish him with the means either of returning to his own country, or of settling comfortably in the colony. Next day I was unexpectedly requested by my uncle to accompany him in his rounds through his plantations, and I accepted his offer with alacrity, from the hope that, in the course of our circuit, which would be extensive, I might fall in with the negro whom I intended to reward. Without this view I should have had no pleasure in the idea of a walk which would present such a mass of human suffering to my eyes.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN we set out, my mind was filled with painful reflections respecting the degraded situation of the slaves; and when we reached the scene of their labour, the sight was truly distressing.

Overseers were placed at stated distances, armed with whips; and whenever the slightest appearance of relaxing from labour was manifested by a slave, this dreadful weapon was unmercifully applied, and generally accompanied by a volley of oaths.

When my uncle appeared amidst a band of negroes they instantly strove to increase their exertions, but never dared to encounter the stern and unfeeling glance of their master. I thought, with sadness, of the contrast between this scene and the harvests of my native country. There no fiends stood by to torment, but the reapers joyously sang songs of war and love.

I was roused from these melancholy reflections by Habibrah directing our attention to a slave which he had discovered asleep under a grove of date trees.

The master, who till now appeared to have been angry at finding no food for his habitual irritability, ran up to the unfortunate man, and rousing him violently, ordered him instantly to return to work.

The poor creature, who was evidently exhausted, rose with a heavy sigh; but when he perceived that he had unwittingly lain on a Bengal rose, which my uncle was rearing with much care, he was ready to sink with apprehension. When the latter saw his

favourite shrub lying broken on the ground, his fury became uncontrollable; he pulled out a whip, small indeed, but the lashes were ~~tagged~~ with iron, which he usually carried at his girdle, and raised his arm to strike the negro, who had thrown himself on his knees. Just as the whip was descending on the victim, my uncle's arm was arrested by a powerful grasp, and turning round in surprise, he beheld a negro (the same whom I sought!) who, addressing him in French, exclaimed with vehemence, “Touch not my brother, who has only harmed a flower, but punish me, who thus lay hands even on thyself!”

This unexpected intervention of the man to whom I owed the safety of Maria, his dignified demeanour, proud look, and imperious tone, astonished me. My uncle, after taking a moment to recover from his surprise, furiously shook him off; and with violent imprecations raised his whip to chastise the unexpected insolence. On the instant the negro snatched the weapon from his hand, and snapping the handle, studded with nails, as one would break a reed, threw it upon the ground, and trampled the disgraceful instrument of vengeance beneath his feet.

I was immovable from surprise, and my uncle from fury. His eyes rolled as if they would have started from his head; his blue lips quivered, and his chest heaved with violent agitation.

The slave, on the other hand, looked on with majestic calmness. His remarkable height and commanding attitude added to the dignity of his aspect; he seemed as if pitying the senseless fury of his master. “White man,” said he, “if thou wilt strike me, here is a weapon;” and he offered him a hatchet.

The master would undoubtedly have taken him at his word, had I not rushed between them; and seizing the hatchet, threw it into a neighbouring pit. My uncle, disappointed in his vengeance, turned on me.

"How dare you interfere?" said he, trembling with fury.

"I interfere," replied I, "to save you from the guilt of murder; to save you, especially, from the murder of one who preserved your daughter's life, and to whom, for that service, you have promised his freedom."

"Freedom!" repeated my uncle, while a shade passed across his countenance, which at once darkened and tranquillized the features. "Yes, he has earned his redemption from slavery; and we shall see of what nature will be the freedom bestowed by the judges of the court-martial."

My blood froze in my veins. I was sensible of my imprudence in alluding to such a promise at such a time, and returned home deeply dejected.

I soon learnt that the slave who had at first incurred my uncle's displeasure, received the punishment of the whip; and that his defender was thrown into the dungeon of Fort Galifet, preparatory to trial for the capital crime of having raised his hand against a white man.

The interest and curiosity which these circumstances excited in a breast like mine may be imagined. My inquiries respecting the prisoner were answered by details quite as singular and mysterious as anything I had myself observed or suspected in his conduct. His companions treated this young negro with the most profound respect; and although a slave himself, there wanted only a sign of his finger to make his fellow-slaves obey him. Yet he seemed to be wholly unknown both in himself and family; and so far from having been born in the colony, it was only a very few years since a slave-ship had cast him forth upon the shores of St. Domingo.

Whence, then, arose the strange empire which he seemed to exert over his comrades? Even the black

creoles bent before him; and they, you are aware, usually hold in utter contempt the *Congo* negroes, by which expression is understood, in the colony, all the slaves imported from Africa.* Although he appeared to be plunged in the deepest melancholy, his extraordinary strength and address rendered his services very valuable in field labour; and it frequently occurred that he performed, in one day, the work of a dozen of his comrades, to preserve them from the chastisement reserved indiscriminately for weakness or fatigue.

He was literally adored by the other slaves; for their veneration, altogether different from the superstitious terror with which they regarded the dwarf Habibrah, seemed actually to be a species of worship.

With all this, the gentleness and simplicity of his demeanour with his equals, who made it their glory to obey him, was as remarkable as his proud and haughty bearing towards the commanders.† These official slaves, the intermediate links between despotism and servitude, of course did him the honour to hate him. With the baseness of slaves, and the insolence of tyrants, they took a malicious pleasure in overwhelming him with labour and vexation; yet at bottom, they could not help respecting the very pride which had kindled their animosity. They never dared to touch him with the lash. When it happened that he was condemned to punishment, a crowd of negroes

* A *creole* is an individual born in the colony, whether black or white. A black creole, therefore, is a slave born in slavery; and this degraded wretch, it seems, is accustomed to look with contempt upon his brother born in freedom, but dragged, or more commonly tricked, into chains by the dastardly ruffians who trade in men! Such is the moral effect of slavery.

† The term for drivers in the French colonies.

ran and offered themselves in his place; and he in the mean while, stood gravely by to witness the infliction of the sentence, as if the volunteers were performing nothing more than their duty. The name by which this strange being was known on the estate was Pierrot.

Such were the particulars I learned concerning this slave; and Maria and I became deeply interested in his fate, not only from gratitude, but from the knowledge we had obtained of his singular character.

We daily entreated my uncle to relieve Pierrot from confinement, representing his unfortunate interference with his authority as well meant, though rudely gone about, and employing all our eloquence in depicting him as the deliverer of his daughter.

My uncle was inexorable: his authority had never before been outraged in a similar manner, and he determined to subject the offender to exemplary punishment. All hope of pardon having vanished, I resolved to avail myself of the only satisfaction which, in such circumstances, I could obtain, the satisfaction of visiting Pierrot in his confinement. Even this my uncle had denied me, but I found means of effecting my purpose without his knowledge.

Although still very young, yet as the nephew of one of the wealthiest colonists of the Cape, I was captain of the militia of the parish of Acul, to which corps, and to a body of dragoons, the charge of Fort Galifet, in which Pierrot was confined, was entrusted. The subaltern who had the particular charge of the fort at this time happened, fortunately, to be Serjeant Thadeus, to whose brother I had rendered very valuable services. I let Thadeus into my secret, and one day, when my uncle was buried in his meridian sleep, I proceeded to Fort Galifet. Thadeus led me to the door of the dungeon, which he opened, and then retired.

Light was admitted into this miserable prison by an aperture not more than six inches long. It was, therefore, with some difficulty that I discovered the prisoner sitting in a corner of the apartment, his head nearly touching the roof. As I approached I was startled by the growling of a dog, and soon perceived a huge animal advancing surly towards me.

“Hero!” cried Pierrot. The dog at once was silent; and crept back to his master’s feet, where he began to gnaw some fragments of miserable food.

I was in full uniform. The light was too weak to enable the tenant of the dungeon to recognise his visitor.

“I am ready,” said he calmly, and half-rising.

“Are you not in irons?” inquired I, surprised at his liberty of motion. My voice trembled with emotion, but he did not recognise me.

“Irons!” repeated he; “there they are!” and he pushed with his foot their broken fragments, which clanked as he touched them.

There was something in his accent, as he spoke, which seemed to say, “I was not born to carry chains.”

I then expressed my surprise that his dog had been admitted to the cell.

“It was by me,” said he; “and if you wish to know how, I will satisfy you.”

He then rose, as well as the low roof permitted, and wrenched with ease an enormous stone from its place in the wall, immediately under the air-hole I have mentioned. When this was done, an aperture was formed, which would easily have admitted two men abreast. It opened upon the wood of banana and cocoa trees, which covered the mount on this side of the fort.

I was silent with surprise; but the next moment, as the light streamed upon my face, the prisoner

stept suddenly back, as if he had trodden unwittingly on a serpent, and his head struck against the roof of the vault.

As he looked at me, I could read a thousand strange and conflicting sentiments in his eyes. These dark mirrors revealed at once hatred, benevolence, and painful astonishment; but reclaiming, as if with a powerful and sudden effort, the mastery of his mind, his face in a moment became cold and calm; and he turned upon me an indifferent glance, as one looks at a stranger.

“I can yet live two days,” said he, “without food!” I shuddered; and remarked, for the first time, the great alteration in his appearance since I had last seen him.

“By means of this opening,” continued the prisoner, “my faithful dog has an opportunity of procuring food, for he cannot eat out of any other hand than mine; and for my part, since I am to die at any rate, it may as well be of hunger as of anything else.”

“You shall not die of hunger, Pierrot,” said I, in strong agitation.

He misunderstood me.

“Doubtless,” replied he, with a bitter smile, “I could live two days longer without food. However, I am now ready. It is still better that it should be to-day than to-morrow. You will not hurt my poor dog?”

I was stung by a painful reflection. This negro, the disciple of nature, in the near anticipation of a cruel death, extended his benevolent regards to his faithful dog; while many a planter (my own uncle among the number), who enjoyed all the advantages of civilized and Christian education, saw without remorse, the punishment inflicted on their slaves produce a lingering and agonizing death.

"You will not hurt Hero?" he repeated. I could contain myself no longer.

"What!" said I, "you not only take me for your executioner, but you doubt whether I have humanity enough to spare your dog?" Pierrot softened and his voice was changed, as he replied, offering me his hand—

"Pardon me! for I love my dog: and—and—the white men have never spared either me or mine!" I pressed his hand warmly.

"But you knew me?" said I, "did you not?"

"I knew that thou wert a white man; and the white men, however good they may be, care so little about a negro! Besides, thou hast already wronged me, and bitterly!"

"In what manner?" demanded I, astonished.

"In what manner? Hast thou not twice preserved my life?" This strange accusation made me smile; and Pierrot, perceiving it, went on with bitterness—

"Yes, thou didst save me from an alligator and a colonist; and what is still worse, thou hast deprived me of the consolation of hating thee!" The singularity of his language and ideas had already become familiar to me; they were so much in keeping with the man, that they hardly appeared out of the way.

"I owe you more," said I, "and much more than you owe me; for I owe you the life of Maria: of my affianced bride!" The name seemed to have the effect of an electric shock.

"Maria!" repeated he, in a choked voice, whilst his head fell upon his hands, and his broad bosom undulated with painful sighs. My suspicions re-awakened; but they were new, unattended by either anger or jealousy. I was too near happiness, and he too near death, for such a rival, if rival he was, to exert any other sentiment than compassion. He at length raised his head—

“Go,” said he; “thank me not.”

“My birth,” continued he, after a pause, “is as noble as thine. The supreme Spirit gave me liberty like thee; but I lament not now: I submit calmly to my fate.”

My curiosity, of which I had previous stirrings, was now fairly roused. I pressed Pierrot to tell me what he had suffered; assured him of the interest I felt in his fate, and told him that Maria was, at that moment, earnestly entreating her father on his behalf. The high-minded and resolute negro burst into tears. Unaccustomed for years to anything but the scowl and scorn of brutal masters, the voice of human sympathy made every chord of his heart vibrate.

He felt so much relieved and comforted that his resolution of abstaining from food began to fail: he went out at the aperture, and returned with some bananas and a large cocoa-nut, and then replacing the stone reduced the opening to its proper size.

I still remained with him for some time; but as he made no answer to my request that he would relate to me his story, I left him, determining soon to visit him again, and giving Thadeus strict charges to attend to his comfort.

CHAPTER V.

My interview with this extraordinary man interested me more deeply than ever in his impending fate. I returned often to visit him in his dreary abode, by way of showing him that one white man, at least, felt for his situation. I could, however, give him no hope that his master would relax from his determination to punish him; and I thought it would be cruel to delude him with vain expectations.

Pierrot, however, not only remained unshaken at the prospect of death, but appeared to hail its approach as that of a friend. I remarked, with surprise, that his dog, Hero, frequently entered the dungeon by the enlarged opening, wearing a large palm-tree leaf round his neck, which his master always took off, and after examining it with much attention, tore it in pieces. I did not presume to ask him the meaning of this, although I conjectured, that by means of this leaf and his dog, he was enabled to hold intercourse with his fellow-slaves without. I was satisfied with the knowledge that he was not concerting a plan for his escape, being aware that it was in his own power to accomplish it when he thought fit.

One day, on entering his cell, I found him singing, in a melancholy mood, the Spanish air, '*Yo que soy contrabandista.*' When he had finished, he turned to me and entreated me, as a brother, to promise,

that if at any future time I might have doubts of his good faith, they should be dispelled on hearing him sing this air. This strange request I promised to comply with, although I neither understood its meaning nor thought it of any moment, as coming from a man who had but a few days to live. But Pierrot had still another ceremony in waiting, which he performed with much gravity. He took up the shell of a large nut, filled it with palm-tree wine, and presenting it to me, desired me to empty it at a draught. I did so, and he then approached me, and taking me by the hand, called me his brother: an appellation by which he ever afterwards distinguished me.

In the mean time I had begun to entertain some hopes on his behalf. My uncle's irritation had subsided, and the near approach of his daughter's wedding-day had opened his mind to gentler influences. The propitious moment was seized simultaneously by Maria and myself. I represented to him that the crime of the black consisted solely in his preventing an act of what he considered excessive severity on the part of his master; while this, however atrocious it might be in a slave, was surely balanced by the heroism which had preserved the life of Maria. Pierrot, besides, I insisted (for so that the end was obtained I cared not about the dignity of the argument) was the best negro on the estate; he was worth a dozen of the rest, and his single arm was sufficient to set in motion the cylinders of a sugar-mill.

My uncle listened; and at length spoke in doubt as to his carrying the accusation before the courts. This was comparative success; but I refrained from carrying the tidings to the prisoner till I could announce to him his full pardon, and thus open the door of his dungeon. What astonished me was, however, that this should not have been done long ago by himself, since it was so completely in his power to fly; but,

when I hinted at the idea, he replied simply and coldly—"They would think I was afraid!"

The 22d of August, the day of my happiness, was now at hand: my uncle busied himself in superintending preparations on a magnificent scale for celebrating the joyful event. His pleasure-grounds were laid out anew and with great taste. Maria's bower, which once she loved so well, was pulled down; and another, adorned with the most beautiful of nature's productions, was erected on a still more romantic site. The spacious mansion-house underwent a laborious cleaning; garlands of evergreens were prepared to decorate the apartments which were to be the scene of the festivities. And last, though not least in his own estimation, Habibrah was equipped in a superb and fantastical suit of new clothes.

I felt myself bending under the load of happiness: Maria would soon be mine, and I cared for nought else in the world besides. One day the lovely creature came running to me, and recapitulated the magnificent presents which her father was heaping on her. She also told me, with eyes sparkling with delight, that her father had pledged his word of honour to grant whatever favour she might demand. "And oh! what favour," continued she, "can I ask? what will afford me a purer or more exalted pleasure than the life of Pierrot—of my deliverer?"

I was enraptured. "A blessing, cried I, will attend our union, since it is consecrated by the performance of so virtuous an action."

Maria hastened to her father to prefer her request; while I, anticipating its fulfilment, flew to Fort Galifet to communicate the joyful news to its lonely tenant.

"Brother!" cried I, on entering, "you are safe, and will soon be free. Maria is your deliverer; your life is to be her marriage-gift from her father!"

The slave started.

“My life! Maria! Marriage! What a strange conjunction! What dost thou mean?”

“I mean that Maria, whose life you saved, is about to be married —”

“To whom?” cried the negro, with a wild and terrible gaze.

“Do you not know?” said I, gently: “to me!” His features suddenly relaxed, and the fire of passion died in his eyes.

“Ah! I remember,” said he; “to thee! On what day?”

“On the 22d of August.”

“The 22d of August! Art thou mad?” cried he, with an expression strangely compounded of grief and terror. He stopped short, and I looked at him in astonishment.

“Brother!” said he, seizing my hand and pressing it strongly, “it is necessary that I give thee my advice. If thou marriest, marry *before* the 22d! Silence! for I will not answer a word. Possibly I have already said too much; but ingratitude is still worse than perjury.” I left him, puzzling myself in vain with the enigma, and full of indecision and inquietude which, however, were soon forgotten in my thoughts of happiness.

When I next saw my uncle, he informed me that he had withdrawn his accusation against the slave, and that I might go and set him at liberty. I hastened joyfully to Fort Galifet; told Thadeus my errand, and we both proceeded to Pierrot’s cell. When we entered, Hero only was there to welcome us. Pierrot was gone. A large palm-tree leaf was attached to the dog as before; and snatching it with eagerness from his neck, I read these words—

“Thanks, brother! thou hast now thrice saved my life. Remember thy promise.” And below there

was written, like a signature, '*Yo que soy contrabandista.*'

As for Thadeus, he saw no possible mode by which Pierrot could have escaped or Hero entered; and he was under the necessity, therefore, of coming to the conclusion, that the negro had been metamorphosed into a dog. I did not attempt to question the soundness of his reasoning; but, enjoining silence as to what he had seen, we left the cell. It was my purpose to have taken Hero home; but he no sooner left the fort, than darting away, he plunged into the wood, and disappeared.

My uncle was enraged when informed of the flight of Pierrot. He ordered diligent search to be made; and when that proved ineffectual, wrote to M. de Blanchelande, the governor, placing the slave at his entire disposal, if he should be arrested.

At length the glorious sun ushered in the morning of the 22d August, 1791. I gazed upon the cloudless sky, and fancied that it revealed the token of my future happiness.

The nuptials were celebrated with great magnificence in the parish church of Acul, and the day was closed with festivity and rejoicing. The evening came at last, and my young bride retired to the nuptial-chamber: but it was necessary, before I could follow her, to perform one of those irksome duties which my station, as captain of the militia, demanded. The disturbed state of the colony rendered it necessary for me to inspect, on stated evenings, the military posts of the district; and my uncle, as a member of the provincial assembly, was rigid in exacting the performance of this duty.

Such precautions, indeed, were nothing more than reasonable, for already some partial revolts of the negroes had taken place at Thibaud and Lagoscette, and the recent punishment of the rebel, Vincent

Ogé,* had excited, to a dangerous pitch, the already irritated feelings of the free mulattoes.

* In the beginning of March, 1791, sentence was pronounced. Bareheaded and naked to the waist, the cord around their necks, on their knees, with a taper in their hands, before the great church of the city, they were to declare, with an audible voice, that they had wickedly, rashly, and ill-advisedly, committed the crimes of which they stood convicted, and for which, being repentant, they asked pardon of God, the king, and of justice. These things being done, to be carried to the place of execution, to have the arms, the legs, the breast, the bowels, torn and severed alive upon the wheel; and there, with their faces towards heaven, to remain as long as it should please God to keep them lingering in existence; after that, their heads to be cut off and exposed upon poles: Vincent Ogé's, in the high road of Dondon; and Jean Baptiste Chavannes's, at Grand Rivière.

When brought out amid the pageantry, the whole body of the provincial assembly assisting at this holocaust, and armed men, and priests and executioners—and the rack, and the wheel—the one talking of consolation, the other preparing the torment and the horrid death, the heart of Ogé, which his accusers say, had never beat but with a benevolent emotion, shrunk within him: he exhibited visible fear. Chavannes was made of sterner stuff. On perceiving the faltering step and trembling attitude of his friend and companion, "Come, come!" said he, "this is no place to play the coward: had you been less brave when the danger was just as imminent, though death not so visible, we had not been here to-day: but being here, our last duty is to make our defeat a triumph."

I have stood upon the spot where these deeds were done. It is near the fountain in the square before the great church. The blinds of the verandah, from which Christophe used to look out with suspicion upon the people as they passed from side to side, gaze down upon it. The children and young girls may be seen loitering all day about the reservoir there, telling their little incidents with a merry heart, where so many sighed in heaviness and despair. The wife of Chavannes still lives, having struggled on with a family of children, through all the vicissitudes of the Revolution. A sister of

With much reluctance I laid aside my marriage garments, and assuming my uniform, sallied forth from my uncle's mansion. I made the rounds of the nearest stations without observing anything unusual; but towards midnight, when I had extended my walk to the batteries in the bay, I was struck with the brightness of the horizon in the direction of the Limonade and St. Louis du Morin. The soldiers and myself attributed this at first to some accidental fire, but soon we perceived smoke rapidly ascending and flames spreading. I now considered it high time to give the alarm, and accordingly proceeded at a rapid pace to the Fort Galifet. On my way thither I was astonished at the unusually excited appearance of the blacks, near whose huts I was obliged to pass. Instead of being asleep, as was usual at that late or rather early hour, they were all talking eagerly; and in the midst of their jargon, I heard frequently an odd, and to my mind, an absurd name, *Bug-Jargal*, pronounced with seeming respect. From the tenor of their discourse I learned that the blacks of the Plain du Nord, a parish on the borders of Acul, were in full revolt, and had set fire to the houses and plantations on the other side of the Cape. The next moment I stumbled over a mass of hatchets and knives concealed among the sedges, and justly alarmed, I immediately proceeded to call out the militia of Acul, and take precautions for keeping down the slaves in the event of their attempting to join the neighbouring conimotion.

The whites were now in a state of defence; the militia of Acul, by my orders, were promptly under arms; and the slaves, perceiving that their conduct was ob-

Ogé resides at the Cape, the mistress of a school. She is the only representative of the family, and inherits his ruined fortunes.

served, assumed their usual appearance, and retired to their resting-places. Every instant, however, the work of destruction was increasing with alarming rapidity: the flames had nearly reached the Limb , and the distant sound of artillery came faintly on the ear. My uncle, whose anxiety had reached its highest pitch, insisted that I should leave a party of the militia in Acul, under the command of a lieutenant, and proceed with the rest to the Cape.

It may be imagined with what unwillingness I complied; and with what irritation I found myself, on my wedding-night, marching away from my expectant bride, the flash of steel in my eyes, the fires of war brightening the heavens around me, and the thunder of the fusillade in my ear.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM the gorge of Limbé, a road traversing the great range of mountains that stretches from end to end of the north of St. Domingo, as a similar one does through the south, you descend from the interior of the island to the great plain of the Cape. From this spot, on the first sight of this magnificent plain, you see beneath you a basin of water, sweeping far into the mainland from a narrow inlet of the sea, so as to have the appearance of a great lake. This is the Bay of Acul. These waters lie stretched at the foot of a lofty detached mountain, called at its southern side the Morne Rouge; and at its northern extremity, where its precipices beat on the ocean, the Haut du Cap. At this extremity is situated the superb city of the Cape, once equal in splendour to the second-rate cities of Europe, and still beautiful. Between this mountain and the sea, wending eastward, is a great carpet of level land, about sixty miles in length and fifteen in breadth; once reputed the wealthiest spot in the intertropical colonies of America.* So much is necessary for the geography of my tale.

* This plain includes the districts of Acul, Plain du Nord, Quartier Morin, Limonade, Au Trou Terrier Rouge, Jaquery, Fort Dauphin, Ounaminthe and Maribarou. It was the scene of the first revolt of the negroes. There are still some well cultivated estates in it; but much of the old properties has

On approaching Cape François, its appearance was truly dreadful. The suburbs of the town, consisting of flourishing plantations, were involved in a dense mass of smoke, through which flames were at intervals discernible; and as we came nearer the scene of destruction, we were covered with showers of burning

been subdivided, either by partial sales, or by concessionary grants made by the government to the soldiers.

Instead of the great proprietorships of the old colony there are now spread through the country knots of little habitations, not so numerous as to form hamlets, nor so disunited as to be considered single farms; but a nucleus of wattled cottages, screened amid the forests, where the inhabitants hold their little savannas or grass patches in common for the pasturing of their cattle; the tilth lands round about being planted in rice, corn and leguminous vegetables. The systematic industry with which these fields are cultivated, differs with the quantity of habitual prudence and skill found in a few leading families, who give a sort of tone or prevailing character to the village. Some possess a pleasing though not a very profitable character. Houses, amid the cool solemnity of noon tide shadows and tillage-grounds, embayed in the wilderness of leaves: a sequestered sort of humble contentedness, that leads one to overlook, in its apparent happiness, that repose which is not the most useful felicity for a young and struggling country. Other grounds, however, are more elaborately cultivated. Trimmed enclosures, in these instances, are seen running along the roadside, and subdivided fields, where corn and rice are intermingled with provisions; and coffee, and sugar-canæs, form separate enclosures. Attached to them is a goodly cottage, with a sort of farm-yard, where cows are assembled for the milking, and a cart or two beneath a shed. But how much does there exist of the solid evidences of comfort if not of wealth, and how much art is there not resorted to to diminish the rigours of manual labour!

This note as well as the description in the text, is from the unpublished materials of the traveller to whom we are indebted for much of the information we have been able to superadd to the romance of M. Victor Hugo.

cinders, carried along by the wind. On entering the town, we could hardly find our way through the streets, owing to the vast assemblage of the frightened inhabitants. A high wind adding to the conflagration, the smoke was driven in huge volumes in the direction of the town, along with immense quantities of sparks from the burning fields of cane, which fell like a shower of snow on the tops of the houses, and even reached the shipping at anchor in the roads. Many buildings were by this means set on fire, and a tremendous scene of confusion ensued.

It was believed that the blacks, in large masses, were surrounding the town, determined to devote its buildings to the flames, and its inhabitants to the sword.

The male part of the population turned out in great numbers, many with arms in their hands, while others opposed with all their might the progress of the destructive element.

It was a terrible and imposing spectacle to see on one side the pale and trembling colonists disputing with the fire possession of the roof that sheltered their families; and on the other, the vessels in the bay, apprehending a similar destiny, and favoured by the very wind which carried the destroying angel to the houses of the landsmen, spreading their broad sails and hastening away from the fatal shore.

In the midst of such confusion, and of many varying reports, mingled with the noise of distant houses falling crashing to the ground, I was at a loss what to do with my men; but was at length relieved from the perplexity, by encountering a guide, in the person of the captain of the squadron of dragoons that had in charge Fort Galifet.

I shall not stop here to describe the picture which the burning plain presented. Many others have described these first disasters of the Cape, and I am

myself inclined to pass hastily over details which are only filled with blood and fire.

In conducting me to the residence of the governor, the captain informed me that the rebel slaves were already in possession of Dondon, Terrier Rouge, Ounaminthe, and even the plantations of Limb . I was alarmed by the latter part of this intelligence, in consequence of the vicinity of Limb  to Acul. When I arrived at the governor's house all was noise and confusion, from the master downwards. I requested M. Blanchelande immediately to provide adequate defence for the preservation of Acul, which I supposed even then invested by the rebels. He was surrounded, however, by too tumultuous an assembly to permit of his acceding to my request. Near him was sitting M. de Rouvray, field-marshall, and one of the proprietors in the colony; M. de Touzard, lieutenant-colonel of the regiment of the Cape, some members of the colonial and provincial assemblies, and a number of the principal planters. Much unseemly altercation was passing between two gentlemen in particular, the one a member of the provincial, and the other of the colonial or general assembly, between which bodies jealousy had for a long time previously existed.

“Your excellency will perceive,” cried the member of the provincial assembly, “that the truth of our oft-repeated pr diction is at length apparent. It is the slaves who have risen, and not the free mulattoes.”

“Your predictions were insincere,” interrupted the member of the colonial assembly; “you yourselves never dreamt of an insurrection of the slaves; and though a sort of revolt was trumped up by you as far back as 1789, it was merely to serve your sinister purposes; and now you take advantage of an actual revolt of the blacks to raise your own credit and to overturn ours.”

“I tell you, sir,” replied the provincial, “that our

assembly is the only one whose opinion is entitled to respect. In the nature of things yours could know little about the matter, since you went to France in a body. What you *did* there is best known to yourselves, although most other people know you received a reprimand for your pains. Our assembly, on the contrary, remained on the spot, watching over the interests of the colony, and acquainting ourselves with the sentiments of the black population."

"If any person here," replied the other, "should be so weak as to believe your unfounded assertions, they will be convinced of their falsehood when I remind them, that the members of our assembly were unanimously re-elected by their constituents, furnishing a very satisfactory proof of the confidence reposed in us by the public."

"Your false statements," warmly retorted the provincial, "were the main cause of the beheading of that unfortunate man, who chanced to appear in a coffee-house without a tri-coloured cockade. It was you, too, who were the means of hanging the mulatto Lacombe, for the monstrous crime of beginning a petition by an invocation of the Holy Trinity!"

"It is false!" exclaimed the member of the general assembly; and the quarrel was about to proceed still farther, when the governor interposed between the two furious deputies.

"Gentlemen," said he, "you forget that we are assembled here, not to discuss the respective merits of the two assemblies, but to consult on an alarming exigency. You are called together to aid me with your counsels, and not to harass me by your divisions. In laying before you the intelligence which has been brought to me, I must request your serious attention, and the suppression of all petty disputes, in your concern for the common weal. The insurrection, according to accounts just received, first broke out last night

about ten o'clock among the slaves of Turpin estate. The rebels, commanded by an English negro named Boukmann, commenced a destructive march, burning and laying waste the estates of Clement, Treme, Flaville, and Noë. Their numbers are increasing every moment, and if their generalship is equal to their powers of destruction we may expect that this town will soon be invested. I have further been informed, and with concern I repeat it to you, that many planters with their families have fallen victims to the rage of the rebels, and that the most shocking cruelties were practised which ingenuity could devise. The proprietor of the estate of Clement, in particular, was barbarously murdered in his bed, and you are all aware of the kindness with which he uniformly treated his slaves. Can I finish this painful recital more tragically than by telling you, that the standard carried in triumph before the rebels in their march, is the body of a murdered infant fixed upon a pike?"

An involuntary shudder ran through the audience. M. de Blanchelande continued—

" Such is an account of what is passing in the suburbs: within the town, confusion and dismay equally reign. Many people, I understand, have killed their slaves, under the impression that they were about to join their rebel brethren; and others, more considerate, have locked them up in dungeons. Some believe, again, that the free mulattoes are at the bottom of these disturbances, and many have, in consequence, fallen victims to the popular fury. In these circumstances, I thought it right to grant them the use of a church for their protection, and to surround it with a party of military. The mulattoes are very indignant at being accused of union with the negroes; and to prove their sincerity, a deputation of them has just waited on me to request that I would furnish them with arms, and appoint them military duty." The

governor was here interrupted by a voice which I recognised—

“ Do nothing of the kind!” cried my old enemy, the imputed *sang-mêlé*, with whom I had fought the duel; “ do not give the mulattoes arms.”

“ What! you do not wish to fight, then?” sneered a colonist. The other, affecting not to hear, continued—

“ The *sang-mêlés* are our worst enemies. An insurrection of the slaves may be easily quelled: not so a revolt of the mulattoes. Believe me, they are deceiving your excellency in asking for arms; they would turn them against ourselves. But the slaves: what are they?”

The poor man thought, by this invective against the mulattoes, to remove from the minds of the planters all suspicion of his own origin; but a murmur of disapprobation rose from the assembly.

“ What are the slaves?” said the old Marshal de Rouvray; “ why, they are forty to three! and God help us if we had such *white* men as you to oppose to them!” The *sang-mêlé* bit his lips.

“ Pray give us your opinion, then, general,” said the governor, “ as to this petition of the mulattoes: ought we to grant their request?”

“ By all means, with your excellency’s permission. We must arm every man able or willing to assist us, and we shall have enough to do after all: these black fellows are in a state of exasperation. Hark you, sir, will you to arms?” The planter grew pale with rage, but he retired without uttering a syllable.

The angry discussions of the meeting were here suddenly silenced by the tremendous tumult of the populace without, who had reached the governor’s house to ascertain what measures were taking for the defence of the town. M. de Blanchelande hastily wrote an order for the arming of the mulattoes, and

delivered it to his aid-de-camp, with instructions to carry it immediately into effect. He then addressed the meeting, requesting their assistance in the adoption of further measures.

The member of the provincial assembly, to whom I have already referred, now rose up, and protested that the present meeting was not competent to go into measures of any importance, and required the immediate convocation of the provincial assembly, which alone ought to direct the affairs of the colony. His opponent of the general assembly rose in his turn, and protested that he neither acknowledged provincial nor colonial assembly; that the general assembly was the only one lawfully constituted, the only one to which the inhabitants of the Cape would yield obedience, and the one which cancelled all others by establishing its sittings at Cape Fran^çois. The gentleman was about to proceed, apparently delighted with the cogency of his reasoning; but he was assailed on all sides by the planters, who were tired and disgusted with this unprofitable discussion. One of them cried out—"What is to become of my fields of cotton and cochineal, when you are spending valuable time in utter nonsense? Who cares a fig for provincial or general assemblies, at a moment when our property and our lives are in such imminent peril?" The planter was followed by several others, all complaining in the same strain. I was amused by one of them, who began to calculate, with much nicety, the amount of his loss per minute: the result was one hundred and thirty livres ten sous. This appalling estimate had no effect on the indefatigable deputies: they set to again with renewed vigour, and raised their voices far above all the tumult of the meeting.

"I contend that the general assembly is extending its jurisdiction beyond the legal limits. Let it make laws, if it will, for Port-au-Prince and the surround-

ing districts, but let it not usurp authority over the inhabitants of the Cape, who, I can assure you, will not submit to its dictates."

"And I aver," replied the opponent, "that his excellency the governor has no power to convoke any other assembly than that called the general assembly, whose president is M. de Caduseh."

"Where is your president, then?" reiterated the other; "where, even, is your assembly? There is not a member of it here but yourself, and the others cannot assemble in sufficient time to meet the exigency. On the contrary, the members of the provincial assembly are nearly all present, and I doubt not would be prompt in adopting means of defence, were the governor to constitute the meeting, and exclude all meddling strangers from its deliberations. According to your scheme, you must yourself represent the general assembly and the whole colony; and woe to that colony which is entrusted to the care of such a conceited fool!"

At this juncture the polite deputies would probably have come to blows, but for the decided interference of the governor.

"Gentlemen, I entreat, I command you to be silent. Away with your assemblies, provincial, general, colonial, and what not! This meeting is a sufficient assembly, and if you do not choose to join in its deliberations, I shall direct the officer to conduct you to the door."

"Zounds!" cried the stentorian voice of General de Rouvray, while the council table resounded with the stroke of his clenched fist: "What cursed fools we are to sit here listening to such madmen! I would rather face a company of grenadiers, than be obliged to hear their eternal clatter. Convoke both assemblies, your excellency, and let us form two regiments of them, with which I shall march against

the rebels: but I doubt whether the noise of their musketry will exceed that of their tongues!"

Silence reigned for a moment after this spirited speech of the general, who now leaned over my shoulder, and asked in a low voice, what I thought should be done with these two contentious assemblies, which were breeding so much discord in the colony; but, without giving me time to reply, he continued—

"These fellows have learned in Paris to talk in this everlasting strain, but they'll find it won't do here. If I had the honour of being in the situation of his excellency, I would endeavour to teach them more respectful behaviour. I would say to them, 'The king reigns, and I govern.' I would send these *soi-disant* representatives to the devil, and with the aid of a dozen promised crosses of Saint Louis, sweep every rebel into the isle of Tortue, formerly inhabited by as great rascals as themselves: the Buccaneers. You are a young man, and must respect the opinion of an old soldier: believe, then, that these sentiments, falsely called liberal, which are revolutionizing France at this moment, will cause certain and entire destruction to the colonies, if imported by any unlucky chance. The philosophers have produced the *philanthropes*, and these again have brought forth the *nephrophiles*, who, in turn, are the fathers of the *mangeans de blancs*, so called till we are able to find a name for them in Greek or Latin. The slaves ought certainly to be treated with humanity; but to talk of giving them liberty, at least at present, is absurd. We are obliged to the Massiac club for the desolation which we this day witness, and the insurrection of the slaves is just the counterpart to the fall of the Bastile."*

* Our author confounds the *Massiac* club, which was a colonial society, with the *nephrophiles*, or *amis des noirs*, of Paris.

While the general was making this confession of his political creed, the stormy discussion was going forward. A planter, who chose to distinguish himself by the appellation of Citizen-General C—, because he had presided at some barbarous executions, thus addressed the meeting:—

“Let us punish, not fight. Believe, me, some terrible examples will have the effect of restraining the rebels in their excesses, and perhaps even of inducing many to return to their duty. I must take credit to myself for having quelled the disturbances of June and July, and the plan I adopted was this:—I caused fifty slaves, some of whom were rebels, to be beheaded, and then ordered their heads to be fixed on the palm-trees which form the avenue to my house. I assure you I heard no more of revolt. Take my advice, now, and defend the approaches to the Cape with the negroes who are still in our power.”

“What would you arm the negroes?” cried some planters in astonishment: “then truly we might give ourselves up for lost!”

“You mistake me, gentlemen,” replied the citizen-general; “I do not wish to arm the negroes: I wish their heads to stand instead of arms. Let us stretch a cordon of skulls round the town, Fort Picolet, and the Point of Caracal. Depend upon it, their comrades will not dare to pass such a barrier. We must make great sacrifices at such a time as this. I have myself five hundred slaves who have not joined the rebels, and am willing to give up their heads for the common cause. Gentlemen, I pray you, let no false ideas of humanity prevent your concurring in this proposal.”

This execrable speech was heard with horror.

“Abominable!” cried some.

“Dreadful! dreadful!” repeated the rest.

The citizen-general had waited till the tumult had subsided, and then murmured between his teeth—

“ My character, surely, is above suspicion; for I am a zealous negrophile, and correspond with all the noblest spirits of the age: with Bressot and Pruneau de Pomme-Gouge in France; with Hans Sloane in England; with Magan in America; with Pezll in Germany; with Olivarius in Denmark; with Wadstrohm in Sweden; with Peter Paulus in Holland; with Avendano in Spain; and with the Abbé Pierre Tamburini in Italy!” This long and learned catalogue seemed to bamboozle the worthy planters, many of whom had probably never heard even the names of the distinguished personages. The citizen-general seemed to rise in his self-esteem as he proceeded in the catalogue, and when he had pronounced the last name, he added, with a sigh, “ But here we have no philosophes!”

The governor again called the meeting to the subject in hand, and many different advices were immediately proffered.

One person suggested the propriety of the planters and their families taking refuge on board the ship *Leopard*, which lay at anchor in the roads.

Another recommended that a proclamation by the governor should immediately be issued, offering a large reward for the head of Boukmann, and enjoining the rebels, on promise of pardon, to return to their duty.

A third gave it as his opinion that the governor of Jamaica should be informed of the revolt, and requested to furnish assistance.

A member of the provincial assembly derided this last proposal, and recommended that intelligence should immediately be forwarded to France, and prompt succours demanded.

“ And of what use will succours from France be?” vehemently exclaimed General de Rouvray: “ will the negroes wait till they arrive? or will the flames,

which are already surrounding the town, wait? Away with such nonsense! One would think that the insurrection had deprived some people of their powers of judgment. M. de Touzard will take troops and artillery, and go and offer battle to the rebels. They will not long withstand the vigorous and well-sustained charge of regular soldiers. Might I advise your excellency to form camps in the parishes of the east, and to erect military stations at Tron and at Valières, I will myself take charge of the plains near Fort Dauphin; I will superintend the fortifications, and put the country in as perfect a state of defence as circumstances will permit. We have many natural advantages in the situation of the plains of Fort Dauphin, which are nearly surrounded by the sea and the Spanish frontiers, and may be said almost to form a peninsula! The peninsula of the Mole possesses similar capabilities of defence. Let us take advantage of all these circumstances, and before the rebels become more formidable by numbers and boldness, proceed against them with a numerous and disciplined force. Come, come! enough of words! Let us now act."

The firm and decided tone, and valiant counsel of the old soldier, at length quelled effectually the wranglings of this tumultuous meeting. The governor thanked him warmly for his prudent advice, and the planters testified their approbation by calling for the immediate adoption of the measures which he had proposed.

The two rival deputies alone seemed to withhold their consent from De Rouvray's counsel: their statements, however, were disregarded; everyone seemed disgusted with their unseasonable and lengthened contentions. They did not leave their seats, however, for a minute or two after the meeting had broken up, but remained muttering their disapprobation of what they

called the hasty and unwarranted decision of the meeting. Indeed, this seemed to be the only point in which they agreed.

I had now an opportunity of soliciting M. de Blanchelande to send assistance to Acul, and he immediately gave me instructions to take the command of my troop, and proceed thither without delay. I was exhausted by the mental excitement which the tumultuous meeting, and the fearful scene of destruction, had occasioned; but notwithstanding, I hurried to collect my scattered forces, and to proceed to the assistance of my uncle and of Maria.

CHAPTER VII.

By this time the day began to break, and I found my militia-men at the rendezvous of the military, sleeping wrapt up in their cloaks, along with the red and yellow dragoons, and a crowd of fugitives from the plain. The ground beside them was covered with effects saved from the flames, and guarded by the affrighted proprietors. Herds of cattle, which had been driven in from the suburbs, bleating and lowing, also added to the confusion of the scene.

I had set about awaking my men, and preparing them for their march, when I perceived a yellow dragoon, at a distance, advancing with furious speed towards us. When he arrived the perspiration was flowing down his face, and his whole person was covered with dust. He was so exhausted that it was with difficulty I learned from him that the event I so much dreaded had actually taken place. The insurrection had reached the plains of Acul; and what alarmed me beyond endurance, the rebels were besieging Fort Galifet, in which many of the planters and their families had taken refuge. The fort, I well knew, could offer no resistance, as it was never intended as a place of defence.

There was not a moment to lose: every man who could procure a horse was in his saddle in a moment, and we were soon on our way to the plains of Acul. I reached the nearest extremity of my uncle's plantations about ten o'clock in the morning.

Oh! what a scene was presented to my view, when

travelling to Fort Galifet. The fields, which twelve hours before were embroidered with all the magnificence of bounteous nature, were now converted into a vast ocean of fire. As far as the eye could reach, nothing was observable but columns of smoke and flame, rising with awful grandeur to the skies. The ear was stunned by the crashing of the falling trees and the crackling of the cane-fields; and frequently we were blinded, and even injured by vast collections of burning embers, carried along by the wind. If one could conceive the final conflagration of this globe, methinks the picture which I have attempted to describe would form no unapt representation of it.

In the midst of this confusion we could detect the yells and shouts of the rebel slaves rising in the distance, and mingling with the hoarse noise of the conflagration. I imagined that these were shouts of triumph; that Fort Galifet had fallen, and that the unhappy beings who had taken refuge in it were leading out to slaughter. Was Maria there? The agonizing thought pierced like a dagger through my heart. Was she there? and was I too late to save? My distracted imagination conjured up images of horror and cruelty. I believed that Maria was encompassed by ruthless villains. I thought I saw her angel form beckoning me to her assistance, and I pushed forward my horse at a furious speed, till obliged by exhaustion to slacken my pace.

We at length came in sight of Fort Galifet; and happy sign! the tri-colour still waved on the platform, and an alarm-fire blazed on the summit. I again redoubled my pace, and urged my comrades to do the same. We flew across the burning fields, at the bottom of which, in the distance, stood my uncle's mansion. How I shuddered at the sight! The doors and windows were broken to pieces, but the walls were entire, untouched by the flames; for the wind blew

from the sea, and the house was separate from the plantations. By the red light of the neighbouring fires, I could see the apertures of the doors and windows crowded with black heads; while torches, pikes, and hatchets, shone in the midst of the fire of musketry, directed by the negroes against the fort.

The walks and gardens which surrounded the house were no longer distinguishable; in short, ruin was stamped on every spot, on which the eye sought to rest.

On looking again, I perceived these countless multitudes mounting, falling, and mounting again upon the ladders, which they had placed against the besieged walls; and in this constant alternation, they looked like a swarm of ants attempting to scale the sides of a tortoise, which every now and then, by a scarcely perceptible motion, shook them to the ground. The walls continued to resist the efforts of the besiegers; but they returned again and again to the attack, with a determined resolution of finally succeeding.

We at length reached the outer circumvallations of the fort; and encouraging my men by the name of their families, shut up like my own within the walls it was our business to preserve, I pointed to the tricolour, which still floated proudly on the platform. I was answered by general acclamations; and forming my little squadron in column, was just about to give the signal to charge. At the moment a cry proceeded from the interior of the fort, which was instantaneously involved in a dense volume of smoke. We could see nothing for some moments; but were at last astounded by an explosion, which shook the earth beneath our feet. The smoke rolled for some time in thick folds round the walls, and then clearing away, showed us Fort Galifet surmounted by a red flag. All was over.

My feelings, at this awful moment I am utterly incompetent to describe. The fort was taken, its defenders massacred, and twenty families barbarously murdered. This general disaster, however, I own it with shame, occupied my thoughts only for an instant. Maria was lost to me, a few hours after the one which had given her to me, for ever! Lost to me, and by my own fault! Because, if I had not abandoned her on the preceding night, in obedience to my uncle's commands, I should have been able, at least, to die with her, and for her; and this would not have been to lose her. These desolating thoughts almost drove me to madness. My despair was like remorse.

I was roused from my trance by shouts of vengeance from my companions. We rushed among the blacks, our sabres in our teeth and pistols in each hand, and dealt death—death at every blow. The negroes, although greatly superior in numbers, did not dare to withstand our exasperation, but fled in all directions. We saw them, however, slaughtering right and left all the whites who fell in their way; and completing, even as they fled, the firing of the fort. Our fury redoubled; each man discharged a brace of pistols, and almost every shot told; and we then pursued them sword in hand. On returning to the fort, I met Thadeus issuing from the postern covered with wounds.

“Captain,” said he, “I don’t know what to think of Pierrot: he is a sorcerer, or an Ouanga, as these infernal negroes call him, if not a devil. We were holding out very well when you arrived; and all would have been saved, had not our evil genius, that unfathomable man, appeared at the moment in the fort: how he could possibly clear his way into it, God knows!”

“What matters that to me?” cried I. “Where is my wife; where is Maria?”

Thadeus stooped down his head, and was beginning to stammer out some explanation, when, emerging from the flames, I beheld a gigantic black bearing along a young woman, who shrieked and struggled in his arms. The black was Pierrot, the young woman was Maria. "Traitor!" cried I, levelling a pistol at his head; but one of the rebel slaves threw himself suddenly between, and fell dead in his place.

Pierrot turned round, and appeared to address some words to me. He then plunged with his prey among the burning canes. An instant after an enormous dog followed in his track, holding between his teeth a wicker cradle, in which lay the infant brother of Maria, my uncle's last child. It was Hero. Transported with rage, I fired my second pistol, but missed him.

I rushed after the fugitive slave like a madman; but my nocturnal journey, so many hours spent without repose or nourishment, my fears for Maria, the sudden transition from the height of happiness to the extremity of wretchedness, all combined, had such an effect upon my bodily frame that I staggered, fainted, and fell. When I recovered I found myself in the arms of my ever faithful attendant, and in the house, or rather in the midst of its ruins, in which my marriage was celebrated, and which I had left a few nights ago a gay and happy bridegroom. I interrupted the blunt but affectionate soothings of Thadeus, in whose arms I awoke to memory, by my eternal question, "Where is Maria?" But his downcast countenance rendered reply unnecessary. Then my memory returned. I retraced every event of the horrible night of my nuptials; and the gigantic negro carrying Maria in his arms through the flames, presented himself like an infernal vision. The frightful light which had burnt forth in the colony, exhibiting in every black the deadly enemy of every white, showed me

Pierrot, the good, the generous, the devoted, who owed me his life three times, as an ungrateful villain, a monster, and a rival! His abduction of my wife on the very night of our union, proved everything I had as yet only suspected; and I saw clearly that the minstrel of the bower was no other than the execrable ravisher of Maria. What a change; and in so short a time!

The blacks who had hitherto fought with unrivalled bravery, were now apparently seized with a sudden panic, and though superior in number to their opposers, took to flight. Every valuable property on the estate, however, was on fire, and the flames continued without intermission.

When I inquired for my uncle, Thadeus led me into his room, and there, horror-struck, I saw him lying upon his bed, a dagger buried to the hilt in his breast. The calmness of the countenance showed that he had been murdered in his sleep.

Habibrah's bed, which was beside my uncle's, was also stained with blood, and part of the variegated apparel of the poor fool was lying on the floor, drenched and torn. All my former aversion towards him was now changed into pity and regard, as it was evident he had perished whilst defending his master. His body, it is true, was not to be found; but I considered that the murderers of my uncle had borne it away, and burned it. How mistaken was I with regard to the characters of Pierrot and Habibrah! The former had now sunk in my esteem into a monster, whilst the magnanimous conduct of the latter had exalted him into a good and grateful man.

The funeral of my uncle was as numerously attended and as solemnly conducted as the agitation of the times would permit; and by my orders, there mingled in the religious service prayers for the soul of the faithful Habibrah.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VIII.

FORT GALIFET was destroyed; our habitations had disappeared; and a longer abode among the ruins was equally useless and impossible. We returned to the Cape the same evening.

There a burning fever seized me. The effort I had made to subdue my despair had been too violent; the tension was too great, and the spring broke. I fell into delirium. My hopes deceived, my love profaned, my friendship betrayed, my future career blasted: all these, bound together, as it were, by implacable jealousy, overset my reason. I felt as if fire ran through my veins, and as if the furies held their orgies in my heart. I saw before my burning eyes Maria, in the grasp of a lover, of a master, of a slave, of Pierrot. I have been told since that I sprang out of bed, and that the strength of six men was necessary to prevent me from dashing my brains out against a wall. Why did I not die then?

This crisis passed by. The doctors, the care of Thadeus, and above all, the hidden principle of life so strong in the heart of youth, vanquished this malady, which, perhaps, might have been my greatest good. In ten days I was cured, and was less sorry for it than might have been expected; for it was worth while to endure life a little longer for the sake of vengeance.

While as yet hardly convalescent, I hastened to M. de Blanchelande to solicit service. He would have appointed me to a defensive post, but I conjured him to incorporate me as a volunteer in one of the moving columns, which were sent out from time to time against the blacks, to sweep the country as with a besom.

The whole country-side was now a complete scene of turmoil and alarm. The white part of the community, terrified at the rapid progress of the insurrection, were busied in fortifying the Cape, collecting forces, and bribing the blacks of their respective households to join their ranks; while the blacks, on their side, were not less assiduous. Even the negroes of Port au Prince, who had hitherto kept aloof, began to stir in the common cause.

Biassou commanded at Limb , Dondon, and Acul; Jean Francois had been proclaimed generalissimo of the rebels of the plain of Maribarou; Boukmann, celebrated afterwards for his tragical end, swept the banks of the Limonade; and lastly, the roving bands of the Morne Rouge had recognised as their chief a negro called Bug-Jargal.

The character of this last, if the floating reports of the day were to be believed, contrasted in a very remarkable manner with that of the others. While Boukmann and Biassou busied themselves in inventing new tortures for the prisoners who fell into their hands, Bug-Jargal was only anxious to furnish them with the means of quitting the island. The others trafficked with the Spanish vessels which cruised upon the coast, and sold them the spoils of the colonists who had fled; while Bug-Jargal destroyed these corsairs whenever he had an opportunity. This chief also saved the lives of Monsieur Colas de Maign , and eight other distinguished planters, who had been actually bound to the wheel by Boukmann. But it

would be too tedious to describe all the traits of generosity ascribed to him by popular rumour.

At this time the militia of Acul, Limbé, Ouanganinthe, and Maribarou, together with the formidable companies of the red and yellow dragoons, constituted our entire force. The militia of Dondon and of the Quartier Dauphin, reinforced by a corps of volunteers under the orders of the merchant Poneignon, formed the garrison of the city.

The governor resolved to begin to deliver himself from the annoyance which the excursions of Bug-Jargal occasioned, and he sent out for this purpose the militia of Ouanaminthe, and a battalion from the Cape. Two days after, the detachment returned to us completely beaten. The governor was absolutely bent upon conquering Bug-Jargal, and he despatched the same corps to retrieve their honour, strengthened by a reinforcement of fifty yellow dragoons, and four hundred of the Maribarou militia. This second expedition was received still more roughly than the other; and Thadeus, who belonged to the expedition, swore, in bitter wrath, that he would be revenged on Bug-Jargal.

But we had not long been plunged in the vexation which these reverses occasioned, when the welcome news arrived that Bug-Jargal had left the Morne Rouge, and was leading his troops across the mountains, to join Biassou. The governor fairly leaped for joy.

“We have them,” cried he, rubbing his hands, “we have them!” and the next day the colonial army was a league on its march from the Cape.

The insurgents, at our approach, abandoned precipitately Fort Margot and Fort Galifet, where they had established a post, defended by large pieces of artillery, carried off from the batteries on the coast. All the bands bent their steps simultaneously towards

the mountains, and we pursued our march in triumph. It was a strange triumph, however. Passing through these arid and desolate plains, each of us sought, with an anxious and melancholy eye, where had been his fields, his wealth, his habitations, and very often he was unable to recognise even their locality.

But time was too precious to permit of our long giving vent to the feelings common to humanity, and we bade a sad, perhaps a last, farewell to the heart-rending scene. Another circumstance, however, occurred, which impeded our progress; and had not contending passions raged within, we should have stood in admiring silence to witness a sight truly grand. The recent conflagration had been so dreadful, that even now the flames were spreading with vast rapidity over cultivated fields, forests, and savannahs. In countries like St. Domingo, where, almost without tillage, the productions of the ground are rich and exuberant, fire spreads with amazing velocity, and is attended by singular phenomena. The appalling sound is heard several miles distant, like the roar of a cataract; the splitting of trees, the crackling of branches, the roots rending in the earth, the shrieking of the grass, the hissing and boiling of the lakes and marshes enclosed in the forest, the whistling of the flames as they devour the air, all contribute to form an indescribable noise, which sometimes dies away, and sometimes swells wildly on the car, according to the progress of the fire. Sometimes a green border of trees is seen surrounding the flaming centre. Suddenly a tongue of fire starts from one of its extremities, and a serpent of blue flame appears running rapidly along the topmost branches, when, in an instant, every vestige of green disappears, hidden by a veil of liquid gold: all is on fire at one moment. The flames in turn are enveloped in a canopy of smoke, which opens and shuts, rises and falls, dissipates and

thickens by turns, becoming sometimes perfectly black, sometimes adorned by a fringe of fire running round its edges. Then a noise like thunder is heard, the fringe is torn away, the smoke ascends, and rains upon the earth, as it flies, a shower of red ashes.

On the evening of the third day, we entered into the glens of Grande Riviere. It was supposed that the blacks were still twenty leagues farther among the mountains, and we pitched our wandering camp upon a mount, which appeared to have served them for the same purpose. The mount was dominated on all sides by peaked cliffs, covered with trees, and owing to the sharpness of those ridges, the place had received the name of *Dompte Mulatre*. The Grande Riviere flowed behind our camp, enclosed between precipitous rocks. The water was here deep and narrow, and the banks sweeping suddenly down, were tufted with bushes. The river was often entirely concealed by garlands of lianas, which, uniting with those on the opposite bank, hung down upon the water, and flung upon its surface large patches of verdure. A spectator from the height of the rocks, might have imagined that he saw, not a river, but a meadow wet with dew. The hollow noise of the current, or sometimes a water-fowl darting suddenly through the curtain of flowers, alone revealed the course of the stream.

By-and-bye, the sun ceased to gild the peaks of the distant mountains of Dondon, and by degrees a broad shadow stole over the camp; and the cries of the eagle, and the measured steps of the sentinel, were the only sounds that disturbed the silence of the hour.

Suddenly the well-known notes of the *Oua Nassé* and the *Camp de Grand-Pré* broke upon our ears; the palms, acomas, and cedars, which crowned the rock, burst into flames, and in the livid light we saw bands

of negroes and mulattoes looking down upon us from the heights, their dark faces reddened with the flames. They were the troops of Biassou.

The danger was imminent. The officers flew to assemble their soldiers; the drums beat to arms; the trumpets sounded the alarm; our lines were formed tumultuously; and yet, instead of profiting by our disorder, the rebels kept their ground, singing the war-song of *Oua Nassé*.

A gigantic black stood alone upon the peak of one of the loftiest rocks: a plume of red feathers floated over his brow, a hatchet was in his right hand, and a red flag in his left. I recognised, at a glance, the form of Pierrot; and at that moment, if a carbine had been in my hand, I fear I should have been guilty of an act of cowardice. He repeated the burthen of *Oua Nassé*, planted the flag upon the rock, dashed the hatchet in the midst of us, and plunged into the water beneath. I was terrified at his danger, for I feared that he would perish without feeling my vengeance. His disappearance seemed to be a signal to the blacks. Large pieces of rocks came thundering upon us; arrows and balls were showered down like hail; our soldiers, unable to defend themselves, fell in despair, and the hill was covered with the wounded, the dying, and the dead.

At this moment, a frightful noise rose from the river below, where an extraordinary scene was passing. The yellow dragoons had adopted an idea, conceived by Thadeus, of escaping under the flexible vaults of lianas with which the river was covered. The commanding officer at first opposed the plan; but at the same instant, having himself received a blow from a stone, he exclaimed that it was better to die the death of King Pharaoh than of St. Stephen, and ordered the serjeant to lead the way. Thadeus leaped boldly down, followed by his comrades, but no sooner had

they plunged from daylight, than they found themselves face to face on the rocks, or in the water, with what might have appeared, in that unearthly scene, a legion of devils: they were the negroes of Morne Rouge.

The naked blaeks swam and divined like amphibious animals, striking with their cutlasses at the whites who swam, and dragging down by the legs those who could not swim, but endeavoured to cross by clinging to the lianas. The war-cries of these terrible assailants, mingled with oaths and shrieks, and the splashing of the reddening waters, formed a description of music worthy of the combat.

It is impossible to say how the day might have gone; for the whites, although they carried themselves bravely, swimming with one hand and striking with the other, were fewer in number than their enemies, and their path across was sometimes interrupted by the wounded of either party gasping and struggling on the water before they descended to the bottom, or were swept away by the current. Thadeus observed, however, in one place, a negro fighting furiously against eight or ten of the colonists; and struck with some strange suspicion, he swam to the spot and recognised Pierrot. He at once seized him by the throat. The quondam tenant of Fort Galifet was in the act of effecting his deliverance with a blow of his dagger, when, looking in the face of Thadeus, the blade dropt from his hand, and he surrendered without a word.

The negroes no sooner saw that their comrade was taken, than, abandoning their other prey, they rushed in a crowd to the spot. Here the whites were scarcely a dozen in number, and would doubtless have been massacred to a man, had not Pierrot, at that moment, shouted some words in his native tongue. The sound rung through the dark vault of death, and produced

an effect like that of magic; for the negroes no sooner heard it than they shot across the river, or darted under the waters, and in an instant, the wearied, bleeding, and astonished colonists were alone with their prisoner.

During this scene, the details of which were related to me by Thadeus, I scrambled with a band of militia, amidst showers of arrows and balls, to the top of a ridge called the Pic du Paon, on account of the brilliant tints of the mica. There we commenced firing, and continued till the enemy, who were now on a level with us, began to give way, and retired from the nearest rocks, first rolling the dead bodies of their comrades on the colonists below, the greater number of whom remained in order of battle on the mount.

We then cut down, and bound together with cords and palm leaves, some of those enormous wild cotton trees with which the aborigines of the island were accustomed to construct canoes of a hundred oars. We were thus provided with a bridge, over which we quickly passed to the ridges evacuated by the negroes, and a part of our army, by this means, found itself advantageously situated. The aspect we presented, as well as our continued fire, appeared to shake the courage of the insurgents: their panic was completed by cries and lamentations from below, mingled with the name of Bug-Jargal. This was followed by the appearance of some of the blacks of Morue Rouge on the rock where the scarlet flag of the rebels still floated in the breeze; they prostrated themselves before the sacred standard, then tore it from its bed, and plunged headlong into the gulf of the Grande Riviere. This seemed to indicate that their chief was either dead or taken.

Encouraged by the idea, I determined to chase the rebels from the rocks which they still occupied, and

for this purpose threw a bridge of trees across to the nearest ridge occupied by the blacks, and leading the way, plunged alone into the mass. When my comrades were about to follow, however, one of the negroes, by the blow of a hatchet, made the bridge, insecurely bound, fly in pieces, which fell roaring into the abyss below. The noise caused me to turn my head, and in that instant I was seized by the blacks, disarmed, and bound, in spite of my struggles.

My despair was only softened by the cries of victory which resounded a moment after. The negroes and mulattoes took to flight, running up the perpendicular ridges of the rock as a sailor climbs the shrouds of his ship. My captors followed the example, and the strongest man among them, hoisting me on his shoulder, leaped with me from rock to rock with the agility of a chamois. The glare of the flames soon ceased to guide him, and slackening his pace, he pursued his way by the feeble light of the moon.

CHAPTER IX.

At length, after crossing many a fierce torrent, dreary wild, and almost impenetrable forest, we reached a valley, situated in the midst of what are called, in St. Domingo, the Double Mountains.

The piercing cold which reigns almost always in this region of the island, although it never freezes, was further increased by the freshness of the night, hardly yet at an end. The dawn began to whiten the summits of the neighbouring heights, while the valley, still plunged in profound darkness, was lighted only by some fires, kindled by the negroes, where they had bivouacked. The scattered portions of their army re-assembled there in disorder; arriving, from time to time, in small groups, uttering cries of mingled grief and rage. New fires every moment glaring up in the darkness, as brilliant as the eyes of the tiger in some wild savanna, showed the additions that were constantly making to the circle of the negroes' camp.

The slave, whose prisoner I was, had placed me at the foot of an oak, from which I gazed upon this spectacle. He attached me by the girdle to the trunk of the tree; and, tightening the knots so as to constrain every motion, put on my head his bonnet of red linen, to indicate, doubtless, that I was his property; and being thus assured that I could neither escape myself nor be carried off from him by others,

he was on the point of leaving me to my reflections. Those reflections had already diverted me from the prospect of the rack or the wheel. As for death, in itself, it was something to seek, not to avoid; but the weakness inherent, perhaps, in human nature, of wishing to die without more than necessary pain, took possession of me.

Though convinced that death would be my doom, my heart revolted at the idea of the tortures which awaited me if I fell into the clutches of Biassou; and an idea occurred to me, that if I could procure an interview with Bug-Jargal, the magnanimous chief of the bands of the Morne Rouge, I might solicit and obtain from him an easier death. I accordingly inquired of the negro to which of the rebel bands he belonged.

“Morne Rouge!”* he proudly replied.

“Then conduct me to your chief!” cried I; “I have something of importance to say to him.”

“To my chief!” said the negro, wringing his hands: “to Bug-Jargal! Alas! alas! he is—he is ——” He could not finish the sentence, but became furious with rage; his eyes flashed fire, and he rolled his body on the ground; then rising and extending his hand in a menacing manner—

“Biassou!” said he; “Biassou!” and with these ominous words he departed.

I now recollect the conduct of the blacks of the Morne Rouge at the conclusion of the battle, and my previous suspicion regarding the fate of their chief was confirmed. Escape being entirely out of the question, as I was incapable of moving hand or foot,

* Morne Rouge, we may remark, is a part of the Haut de Cap mountain. It is detached from the principal chain, and rises out of the plain, with the city of the Cape on one hand, and the bay of Acul on the other.

and knowing none to whom I could apply who could ameliorate my approaching sufferings, I resolved to await and to suffer death with christian fortitude.

With the assistance of the numerous fires with which the valley was illuminated, and around which the negroes were bemoaning, with ridiculous gestures and hideous yelling, their unlucky fortune, I, even with such a futurity before me, and such a past behind me, saw and admired the stupendous works of nature by which I was surrounded: the darkness of the night heightened the effect of the solemn grandeur of the scene, which corresponded to the train of mind which I was then in. I also observed the motions of the negroes who, at intervals, with manifest tokens of rage, disappointment, and grief, advanced in disordered bands towards the fires, which seemed to be their place of general rendezvous. At length, so formidable a number had collected, that several new fires were obliged to be lighted, and the valley, at that hour of night, presented a very uncommon and interesting scene. At a little distance from me a party of negresses, by whom I was unobserved, were adding fuel to an already considerable fire. In these miserable, fierce, and haggard-looking creatures I recognised Griotes; from their necks were suspended charmed collars, amulets, &c. &c. which, even in our own favoured land, in the dark ages of superstition, were considered to possess mysterious qualities by which diseases were cured, and they are still held in the highest estimation and veneration by the abject posterity of Ham. The ludicrous spectacle which these misguided women presented is quite inconceivable; the hideous grimaces which they assumed while they sung in measured tones, with their shrill voices, some superstitious rhyme, actually made me shudder; their fingers and toes were literally loaded with rings; their bracelets, nose-jewels, ear-rings, &c. were nearly

as innumerable; and each wore a fantastical apron of variegated feathers, which was her sole covering.

You may possibly have heard of these people, who in Africa are called Griots, and whose wild talent for poetry resembles frenzy. These strolling musicians, wandering from country to country, are in those barbarous climes what were the ancient rhapsodists, and, in the middle ages, the minstrels of England, the menesingers of Germany, and the trouveres of France. In Africa, they are called Griots; the females are called Griotes, and accompany the rude songs of their husbands by most singular and disgusting dances (parodying the Hindostanee and Egyptian ceremonies of a similar kind), and far exceed in grotesque ugliness the savage exterior of the males.

It was some of these women who now seated themselves in a circle, their legs bent under them in the African manner, and so near me, that to escape observation I thought was impossible. They seemed unconscious, however, of the presence of a spectator; and as the red light of the flames trembled on their hideous countenances, I could almost have been persuaded that they were beings from the infernal world.

When their circle was formed, they all joined hands, and the eldest, in whose bushy and dishevelled hair there was standing erect a large heron's feather, cried out "*Ouanga!*" I guessed that this word was the signal of the commencement of one of their strange sorceries, and I was not mistaken. All repeated after her, "*Ouanga!*" and the presiding priestess tore out a handful of her hair, and throwing it into the flames, exclaimed, "*Malè o Guiab!*" which in the negro jargon, signifies, "*I shall go to the devil.*" The rest following her example, performed the same mystic ceremony, and repeated gravely, "*Malé o Guiab!*"

This strange invocation, and the burlesque grimaces which accompanied it, surprised me into the involuntary convulsion which sometimes seizes the gravest, or the saddest. I attempted to repress the inclination, but it was in vain, and I burst into laughter. This explosion, which escaped from a heart filled with grief, rather than mirth, produced a scene of a very gloomy and terrific character.

The negresses, disturbed in their mystery, rose simultaneously and ran round me, screaming "*Blanco! blanco!*!" I never saw an assemblage of features so diversely horrible as they presented, with their black faces, white teeth, and blood-shot eyes. They seemed about to tear me to pieces; but a sign from her of the heron's plume arrested their hands.

"*Zote cordé! zote cordé!*" cried she, and on the instant they stripped off their aprons, threw them on the ground, and joining hands, began to spring round me in the lascivious dance which the negroes call *la chica*. This dance, of which the grotesque and alluring attitudes express only pleasure and gaiety, borrowed now from the different accessory circumstances a more sinister character.

The hideous gestures into which they threw themselves, the fiendish smile which sat upon their countenances, and especially the expression of their white eyes, as every now and then each naked sorceress held up her face to mine, thrilled me with horror; and recollecting that it was the custom of savages to dance around their intended victims of torture, I was fully convinced that a dreadful death awaited the profaner of their august ceremony. The music of *la chica* was a measure of shrill and prolonged sounds, drawn by the president of the black sanhedrim from a kind of spinnet composed of a score of wooden tubes, diminishing gradually in length and breadth.

On a signal being given, each negress took her respective instrument, which consisted of pincers, needles, saws, &c. &c. and put the points of them into the furnace.

I now understood what kind of death I was to die, and a convulsive shudder shook my frame. The dance was concluded; the signal was repeated, and the whole band marched processionally towards the fire, whence they took out their instruments of torture, now red-hot, and began the last round of *la chica*, accompanying it with mournful cries.

I closed my eyes, in order to shut out the spectacle of the friskings of these female demons, who breathless from fatigue and rage, clashed, in cadence on their heads, their flaming weapons, which emitted a shrill sound and a thousand sparks.

I waited, shrinking, the moment in which I should feel my flesh torn, my bones calcined, my nerves twisted by the burning saws and pincers; and a universal shudder ran through my frame: it was a frightful moment!

Happily this did not continue long. As the *chica* of the Griotes was ended, and the tragedy about to begin, I heard the voice of my captor shouting from a distance—

“*Que haceis, mugeres de demonio? Que haceis alli? Dexais mi prisonero!*”* and opening my eyes, I found it was day-light. The Griotes stopped short, but appeared to be less moved by his menaces than confounded by the presence of a personage of somewhat singular exterior, who accompanied the negro.

He was a man very thick and very short; in short, a dwarf, whose face was concealed by a white veil

* What are you doing, you devil's wives? What are you doing there? Leave alone my prisoner?

pierced with three holes for the mouth and eyes, in the manner of the penitents. The veil, which fell on his neck and shoulders, left naked his hairy breast, that appeared to be of the colour of a griffe, and on which shone, suspended to a chain of gold, a silver ostensorio, such as is used in Catholic churches. The handle of a thick poignard, in the form of a cross, protruded from his scarlet girdle, which served to fasten a petticoat of green, yellow, and black stripes, the fringe of which descended to his broad and deformed foot. In his hand he carried a white staff, a string of prayer-beads hung at his girdle, near the dagger; and his head was adorned by a pointed cap ornamented with shells, in which, as he approached, I was not a little surprised to recognise the *gorra* of Habibrah. Some spots of blood remained among the hieroglyphics with which this sort of mitre was covered; the blood, no doubt, of the faithful buffoon. These traces of murder were a new proof of his death, and awakened in my heart a new regret.

The moment the Griotes saw this heir of poor Habibrah's cap they fell prostrate upon the ground, exclaiming "*Il Ouanga!*" and I perceived that I was in the presence of the priest or sorcerer of the army of Biassou.

"*Basta! basta!*" said he, when he came up to the party, in a grave and hollow voice; "*Dexais il prisonero de Biassou!*"* and the negresses, rising in disorder, threw down their instruments of death, and re-assuming their aprons, dispersed with a whirring sound, like a company of witches.

At this moment the Ouanga looked at me for the first time.

He started, recoiled a pace, and extended his baton towards the Griotes, as if intending to call

* Enough, enough; leave alone the prisoner of Biassou !

them back; but at length, grumbling between his teeth the word "*maldicho*," and whispering something in the ear of the negro, he retired slowly, with his arms crossed, and in an attitude of profound meditation.

CHAPTER X.

I WAS now informed of the orders of Biassou concerning me; which were, that in an hour I was really to enjoy the privilege of an interview with that mighty chief. Though little anticipating a renewed escape from death, during the hour of respite I leisurely surveyed the camp of the enemy which, indeed, presented a sight at which, had I been in a different mood, I should have laughed heartily.

The dress of the rebels consisted of the torn and bloody clothes, worn by my slain and (but the day before) brave fellow-countrymen and soldiers. Military and sacerdotal ornaments formed their principal array, and were evidently stuck on at random. It was no uncommon sight to see neck armour underneath waistbands, epaulettes over hoods, and several other ridiculous contrarieties, which presented the advantage of variety at least.

The blacks, whose lives had hitherto presented a scene of hard and constant labour, now seemed determined to take advantage of their comparative independence; and to enjoy their dearly won liberty, by delivering themselves up to a state of inactivity, totally unknown in the regular army. Many a poor negro (on whose body the marks of the stripes so lately inflicted by a cruel, perhaps a now deceased master, were not yet obliterated) lay stretched fast asleep, in conscious security, upon the scorched

ground, and not many feet distant from a hot fire. Whilst others, who in slavery had forgotten to sing, now fearless of the voice of an oppressor, lay singing their monotonous airs upon the threshold of their little *ajoupas*, or open huts, covered with banana or palm trees, and resembling, in their conical form, our military tents.

Their black, or copper-coloured wives, assisted by little dark imps, were busily preparing the food of the men; and I saw them stirring with pitch-forks bananas, peas, cocoa, maize, the Caribbean cabbage (called *tayo*), and a quantity of other indigenous vegetables, which they boiled along with quarters of pork, turtles, and dogs, in great kettles, stolen from the plantations.

In the distance, at the limits of the camp, the Griots and Griotes formed great circles round their sacrificial fires; and the wind carried me by fits some fragments of their songs, mingled with the sound of guitars and balafas.

A guard of soldiers, who, with an air of consequential dignity, strutted along the very summit of a ridge of rocks, near the head quarters of Biassou, attracted in particular my attention. These negro sentinels, standing on the peak of a perpendicular precipice, often whirled round like the weathercocks on gothic spires, shouting from one to the other the cry which maintained the security of the camp, "*Nada! Nada!*" In the mean time, troops of curious negroes were constantly grouping around me, all of whom looked at me with a threatening air.

The hour at length expired, and the negro, whose prisoner I was, unbound me, and resigned me to a party of soldiers tolerably well equipped, who at this moment advanced; and who, in exchange for so precious a piece of merchandise as myself, presented him with a bag, which he greedily snatched at, tumbling

its contents upon the ground. Its contents were piasters; and while the fortunate captor was on his knee counting his gains, my new possessors led me away. Having lain so long in the same position, I was so universally cramped, that I was almost as incapable of moving as when bound, and in this state the soldiers dragged me along. Their uniform was of a thick reddish brown cloth, ornamented and cut according to the Spanish fashion; a kind of Castilian montera, surmounted by a red cockade, concealed their woolly locks; and a bag, suspended from their waist, answered the purpose of a cartouch-box. The only weapons which they carried were, a heavy musket, a sabre, and a poignard. I afterwards understood that my escort consisted of the body-guard of Biassou, into whose august presence I was shortly to be ushered.

During our walk a gloomy silence was maintained, and we were often obliged to take a circuitous rout, owing to the thickly interspersed *ajoupas* which encumbered the camp. At length we arrived at a great cave, the entrance into which is by a hole in one of these immense rocks under which the valley is comparatively buried.*

* The sort of cavern mentioned here is not an uncommon object in the scenery of St. Domingo. "The road," says our manuscript friend, "by which I approached the Cavern-hill, was through a pleasant little valley called La Guille, having in it a great deal of good tillage in coffee, corn, and rice. The rocky hills we had previously passed were occupied by forests with underwood of coffee. Bowers of bamboo covered the stream, making a matted alcove with their leaves and branches, and leaving the ground prettily strewed with the red lily. A wooded mountain, about five or six hundred feet in height, rises from the vale at one extremity, with a cliffy face to the river, which washes its very base. A few masses of rocks lying at the foot of this cliff, led into a spacious arch-

I confess it was not without a shudder that I ascertained we had reached our journey's end. A

way: the vestibule of the grotto. The eye, accommodated to receive in undiminished volume the intense radiance of the mid-day sun, distinguishes, at entering, nothing but the visible darkness of an immense chamber. A passage being, however, gained to the centre of the vault, where the dome pierces through the mountain, the light pours down a subdued radiance through the forest-leaves above; and a roof of elegant fret-work reveals itself, with walls stuccoed with the white stalactite incrustations falling in continued folds exquisitely disposed. Natural niches and recesses of different dimensions are around this saloon. The dome rises out of the saloon with a regular irregularity to about two hundred feet high. The light falls on the edge of the aperture, as on the tracery in the centre tower of York Cathedral, and here radiates upon a succession of ridges around the vault-like galleries.

“During the time we loiter, so as to arrive at a state of vision which renders perceptible the whole details of the chamber, it is surprising how mysteriously the entire parts seem coming forth out of the darkness, till every minute projection swells into light, and shadow, and distinctness. On turning now to descend the main gallery leading outward to the great vestibule, the vision has become so well adapted, that that which seemed but shapeless darkness, is now seen, as if set before you by the conjuring of a magician, to be a hall of exquisite net-work: rich and varied beyond all power of description. The stalactites hang from the roof like pendant chaplets. Arches project from the sides of the cavern as if on pilasters of coral work. The light, the darkness, the blended shadows, the broken illumination, the hanging garlands, the crystallized icicles, are all so many exquisite creations, as if they were the visioned beauties of a wild dream: not the realities of earth.

“Every year, before the discovery of America, we are told, the caciques of each principality came, with a crowd of their subjects, to renew here their homage to the gods of their country. Some time before, Caonabo, the Carib warrior, erected for himself a kingdom in the heart of the Indian Haiti,

splendid cashmere curtain, less remarkable for the brilliancy of its colours than for the variety of its patterns and the amplitude of its folds, concealed the interior of this picturesque work of nature. Without any previous information I should have known, from the formidable company of well equipped soldiers who surrounded the grotto, that some distinguished personage was within.

After a few minutes' conference with two officers, whose province it was to guard the entrance of the cave, the chief of my conductors raised the curtain, and after having thrust me in, instantly dropped it.

The sudden transition from the light of the sun to

threatening the subjugation of the entire island, which he and the preceding invaders had desolated wherever they conquered. A prince of Marieu demanded, in penitence, fasting, and prayer, to be informed whether it was the will of those who held the fate of men in their hands, that they should so become vanquished and enslaved. He was answered, 'No; not by these naked warriors should the people perish; but when they should see men arrive among them, clothed from head to foot, with swords of metal at their sides, then should they know that the time of their destruction was come, and, led into captivity, they and their children would be seen on earth no more.' The memory of this prediction was preserved in solemn chants, and celebrated in severe fasts to avert the predestined wrath of their divinity. It was a time of woe and lamentation, and the song which declared the event, was heard by the early Spaniards.

"No sculptures at present exist in the cavern, though some have, from time to time, been found in the ground near it. It is certainly exceedingly beautiful, and worth the pilgrimage of any traveller. It is said to be one hundred and fifty feet in length, and rivals all that has been written of the grotto of Antiparos, without having its extent. The basaltic cave of Staffa differs totally from it in character. It is like the difference between the Doric and the Gothic architecture: King Henry VII.'s chapel, and the Parthenon put in comparison."

the light of a lamp, which was suspended from the roof of this subterraneous abode, and diffused around a wavering and uncertain light, and especially the aspect of the assembly among whom I found myself, deprived me for a moment of my wonted presence of mind. At length, in the middle of the room, surrounded by a double body of mulatto soldiers, and seated upon a huge trunk of mahogany, which covered at least half of the carpet of parrot feathers, I observed a man of middle stature, who apparently belonged to that class of people called Sacatras, who are not downright negroes, but are distinguished from them by an almost imperceptible shade of difference in their colour.

This man was dressed in the most ridiculous manner I ever beheld. His costume consisted of a silk girdle, from which was suspended a cross of St. Louis, a pair of substantial blue drawers fastened beneath the girdle, a short waistcoat of white dimity, a pair of gray boots, a round hat gaily set off by a red cockade, and a pair of epaulettes, one of which was of gold, the other of yellow wool. Annexed to the former of the epaulettes, were two silver stars, worn by field-marshals, and a couple of brazen ones, formerly the rowels of spurs, formed very brilliant appendages to the latter. These ornaments hung from the *breast* of the chief, who imagined, I suppose, that they would have a finer effect in such a position. A very handsome sabre and pistols, richly ornamented, lay by his side upon the carpet of parrot's feathers.

Behind his tent, silent and immoveable, stood two young children, clothed in negro drawers, each with a fan of peacock's feathers in his hand: these slave children were white. Two crimson velvet cushions, which had probably belonged to a private presbyterian chapel, marked two places on each side of the block of mahogany. On the right cushion, sat the veiled

Ouanga, whose providential arrival had so lately saved me from a miserable death: his legs folded under him, his magic stick in his hand, and his whole person as immovable as the porcelain idols in a Chinese pagoda. I observed that his glistening eyes were constantly fixed on mine, and I could not help quaking at the look of stern composure with which he regarded me.

Among the multiplicity of flags, banners, and standards of every description, which lay upon the carpet in confusion, I despaired the white flag of the *fleur de lis*, the tri-coloured flag, and the flag of Spain. The rest were fancy ensigns, among which the great black standard of the revolted slaves was conspicuous.

Hanging on the wall at the bottom of the apartment, above the head of the chief, I observed another object which attracted my attention; it was a large framed picture of Ogé, the mulatto, who, in the preceding year, was tortured to death at the Cape for the crime of rebellion, along with his lieutenant, Jean Baptiste Chavannes, and twenty other blacks or *sang-mélés*. This Ogé was the son of a butcher in Cape François, but was now represented, according to his custom, in the uniform of a lieutenant-colonel, with a cross of St. Louis suspended from his neck, and the order of merit of the Lion, which he had bought from the Prince de Limbourg, in Europe.

The Sacatra chief, before whom I had been brought, was of the middle size. His ignoble features exhibited a curious mixture of cunning and cruelty. He ordered me to approach, and looked at me in silence for some time; then, with a sort of convulsion like the laugh of a hyena—

“I am Biassou,” said he.

Though perfectly aware that it was the monster of whose exploits I had heard so much, I inwardly

shuddered when he pronounced his own name and in the midst of a hideous laugh. However, I believe I betrayed no emotion, but returned him, without answering, a calm and proud look.

“Why,” said he, in tolerably bad French, “you look as if you were already on the stake, since you cannot bend the bone of your back in the presence of Jean Biassou, generalissimo of the conquered countries, and field-marshall of the armies of *Sa Majestad catolica*.”

It was the policy of the principal rebel chiefs to pretend that they acted sometimes for the king of France, sometimes for the revolution, and sometimes for the king of Spain.

Still dumb, I crossed my arms upon my bosom, and met the fierce glance of his eye without shrinking. His habitual convulsion was repeated.

“Ho! ho!” sneered he, “*Me paricas hombre de bien carazon.** Well, listen to what I am about to say to thee. Art thou a Creole?”

“No,” replied I, “I am a Frenchman.” This was the first time my voice had been heard since my introduction into his presence; and the boldness with which I uttered these words, seemed to confound him.

“That is very well,” replied the chief; “I see by thy uniform that thou art an officer. How old art thou?”

“Twenty years.”

“When didst thou complete them?”

This question reminded me of the fatal night of my marriage, and a thousand sad remembrances rushed into my mind. I had not long, however, to ruminant, for Biassou demanded impatiently why I did not answer him, and I immediately replied—

* Thou seemest a man of good courage.

“On the day that thy companion Leogri was hung.”

The eye of the chief kindled, his brow darkened, anger trembled on his lips, and the strange convulsion returned with new force: however he restrained himself, and said coolly—

“Let me see: it is twenty-three days since Leogri was hung, Frenchman; thou wilt be so good as to tell him from me this night, that thou hast lived twenty-four days longer than he, as I intend thou shalt live to-day, in order to be able to inform my friend how the game goes on, and what is doing at the head-quarters of Jean Biassou, field-marshal, and what is the authority of that generalissimo over the *gens du roi*.”

It was by this name that Jean Français (who called himself grand admiral of France, and his comrade Biassou) designated their hordes of negroes and revolted mulattoes.*

By orders of the generalissimo, I sat down between two guards in a corner of the grotto.

Orders were now issued that the whole army should be assembled round the head-quarters of our illustrious commander, who meant in a short time to review it; and then he turned to the Ouanga.

“Monsieur le Chapelain,” said he, “put on your sacerdotal vestments, and celebrate for us and our soldiers the holy sacrament of the mass.”

The Ouanga rose, bowed profoundly, and began to whisper something in the ear of Biassou, which, however, the latter interrupted rudely.

“What!” cried he, “no altar, *senor cura*? No altar, and mountains and rocks surrounding us on

* The negroes were incited to take up arms by the Jesuits. as partizans of church and king, against the republican spirit of the times.

every side! Will the *bon Giu** accept of no thanksgiving that is not offered up from magnificent temples, or from altars ornamented with gold and lace? Gideon and Joshua adored him before heaps of stones. Come, come, *bon p^{et}* let us do as they did; it is sufficient for the *bon Giu* if our hearts be fervent."

I was confounded with these sentiments; I could scarcely credit that they proceeded from the lips of a being of so forbidding an aspect, and I should have been favourably impressed both with Biassou and his religion, had he not, in connection with his last words, added the following:—

"But stay; since an altar appears so indispensable to thee, convert into one the large sugar-chest which was stolen the day before yesterday by the *gens du roi* from the Dubuisson estate."

The ingenious proposition of Biassou was immediately adopted. The interior of the cave was prepared for this parody of the divine mystery. A tabernacle was brought in, and the holy pyx, the same which had belonged to the church in which my union with Maria had received from heaven a benediction so soon followed by misfortune. The stolen sugar-chest was then erected into an altar, and covered with a white sheet by way of a communion-cloth, which, however, did not conceal the inscription, "*Dubuisson and Co. For Nantes.*"

The sacred vessels were placed upon the communion cloth, and the chaplain was beginning the service, when he perceived that there was no crucifix. The hilt of his poniard, however, happened to be made very *a propos* in that form, and answered the purpose fully, and he placed it upright opposite to the

* Creole patois: the "good God," the *bon dieu*, by which is meant Jesus Christ.

† Good father.

tabernacle, between the chalice and the shrine which held the blessed wafer. He then, without removing either his penitential veil, or Ocanga bonnet, threw over his back and naked breast the cope which formerly belonged to the prior of Acul, opened the silver clasps of the missal in which had been recorded the prayers of my fatal marriage, and announced by a bow to the chief, which took at least two minutes to perform, that all was ready for the commencement of the ceremony.

At a signal from the chief, the cashmere curtain was withdrawn, and I beheld the whole rebel army ranged before the cave in perfect military order. Biassou took off his round hat, and knelt before the altar.

“On your knees!” shouted he.

“On your knees!” repeated the chiefs of the battalions. A sudden roll of the drum was heard, which as suddenly sunk into silence, and in an instant the black hordes dropped upon their knees like one man.

The whole scene would have had a most imposing effect, had not my soul revolted at the idea of a sugar-chest for an altar, and a poignard for a crucifix; and I determined, notwithstanding the orders of Biassou, not to appear even to join in the profanation. My purpose, however, was defeated. The two vigorous mulattoes who guarded me very expertly drew away my seat, and drove me upon my knees; and in that posture I was compelled to remain till the service was completed, and thus offer a semblance of respect to the semblance of worship.

With all the dignity and gravity of conscious importance, the spiritual conductor of the service commenced; the elder of the two white slave children officiated as deacon, the younger as sub-deacon; and the awe-stricken and still prostrate army, as far as

my eye could reach, assisted at the ceremony with a devotion of which their chief set the first example.

At the moment of the exaltation of the host, the Ouango, holding in his hand the blessed wafer, addressed his auditory in these words: "*Zoté coné bon Giu; ce li mo fé zoté voer. Blan touyé li, touyé blan yo touté!*"* A deafening shout, followed by roars of applause and clashing of arms, was the reception of this address; and it required the exertion of all Biassou's authority to prevent that sinister noise from becoming the signal of my fate. I comprehended then to what an excess either of courage or atrocity men could be carried, whose crucifix is a poignard, and on whose spirits every impression they receive is sudden and profound.

* "You know the good God; it is He whom I now show you. The whites killed him; do you kill the whites!" Tous-saint l'Overture was afterwards in the habit of addressing the negroes in the same manner, after having communicated.

CHAPTER XI.

THE mock service was concluded as it had commenced, by a solemn bow from the Ouanga, evidently not so much out of respect to Biassou, as to enhance his own importance in the public opinion. The chief, after slightly returning the salute, rose and addressed me in French.

“You whites,” said he, “accuse us of having no religion; but from the service in which we have just now been engaged, I suppose thou seest that the charge is false, and that we are good catholics.” I could not possibly determine whether he spoke in jest or earnest.

A moment after, he called for a crystal vessel, which he nearly filled with black maize, and then sprinkled on the top a few grains of white. This done, he raised the cup above his head, in order to be seen by the whole army, and exclaimed in a loud voice: “Brothers, you are the black maize; your enemies, the whites, are the white maize.” At these words he shook the cup, and all the white grains having disappeared beneath the black, he exclaimed, with an air of inspiration and triumph, “*Guetté blan ci la la!*”* At these words the rocks and mountains echoed and re-echoed with the acclamations which greeted the parable of the chief. Biassou continued mingling bad French with his creole and Spanish jargon.

* Now look, where are the whites!

*“El tiempo de la mansuetud es pasado,”** said he; “too long have we remained meek and patient, like the sheep to whose wool our hair is compared. Too long have we acknowledged superiority in the whites by our own submissive behaviour; but come, let us show that we know our rights, that our spirit, though asleep, was not dead; let us check every unmanly feeling, if such there be within us; let us leave cowardice and compassion to children and to women; let us spread terror and devastation whithersoever we go; and above all, let us be implacable as the panther, the jaguar, and the other beasts of prey in the countries whence we were torn; let us be dauntless, pitiless, and brave, and victory and liberty shall assuredly crown our endeavours. Is it not to the whites that we are indebted for the introduction of slavery? Did they not carry us per force, and export us like merchandise from the land of our fathers? Have they not levelled us to the rank of beasts of burden, which, indeed, have often been more humanely treated than we; and when we arose in rebellion against them, they supposed that the sight of their numbers, costly arms, and fine uniform, would at once bring us, the despised, black, and naked sons of the desert into renewed subjection? Saint Loup has two festivals in the Gregorian calendar, and the Paschal Lamb only one! Is it not true, Monsieur le Chapelain?”

The Ouanga bent his head.

“They are come,” pursued Biassou, “they are come, the enemies of human regeneration; these whites, these colonists, these planters, these merchants, *verdaderos demonios* vomited from the mouth of Alecto! *Son venidos con insolencia;*† they were covered in their pride with arms, plumes, and magni-

* The time for passiveness is gone by.

† They have come with insolence.

ficient dresses, and looked down upon us with contempt because we were black and naked. They imagined that they could disperse us as easily as those peacock plumes put to flight the black swarms of mosquitoes and sandflies!" And at this comparison he snatched from one of his white pages the fan that he carried, and waved it over his head with a thousand vehement gestures.

"But oh, my brethren!" continued he, "our army has showered upon them like a cloud of flies upon a dead carcase. They are fallen, with their beautiful uniforms; fallen under the blows of those naked arms which they believed to be without strength; ignorant as they were, that the good timber is the hardest when without its bark. They tremble even now, these execrable tyrants! *Yo gagné peur!*"*

A burst of acclamation and triumph responded to the last words of the chief, and the cry of "*Yo gagné peur!*" echoed far and near for the space of several minutes.

"Blacks, creoles and Congos," proceeded Biassou; "vengeance and liberty! *Sang-melés*, I conjure you to be faithful to us; let not the plausibility *de los diablos blancos* win you to their side. Your fathers, to be sure, were Europeans; but remember your mothers were Africans! Besides, would you, *Ö hermanos de mi alma*,† cringe to those who never treated you as children, but trampled over you, and treated you as slaves? Whilst a miserable rag scarcely covered your sides from the burning sun, your unnatural fathers strutted under *burnos sombreros*, lounged upon couches of down, were carried in palanquins, wore nankeen clothes, except on festival days, when they decked themselves out in gorgeous robes of vel-

* They are terrified.

† O brothers of my soul!

vet and *barracan a diez y siete quartos la vara.** Accursed be these oppressors of humanity! But as the holy commandments of the *bon Giu* prohibit the destruction of the parent by the child, or of the child by the parent, we must obey if we expect to prosper. Should you, therefore, encounter your father in battle, remember you must say one to another, *Touyé papa moé, ma touyé queno toué!*† Vengeance, *gens du roi*, freedom and equality to all men! the surrounding islands, which slavery has so long enchain'd, now echo with the sacred cry of liberty. That cry has arisen from Quisqueya,‡ and has awakened Tobago and Cuba! You know to whom we are indebted for the raising of our standard? It is to the chief of one hundred and twenty-five maroon negroes of the Blue Mountains; it is to a native of Jamaica: in a word, it is to Boukmann, that mighty espouser of his own and his brethren's cause! A victory over the whites was his first act of fraternity with the blacks. Then let us follow his glorious example: the torch in one hand and the hatchet in the other. Let us give no quarter to our would-be masters, but let us murder their families, devastate their estates, and hew down every tree that rears its branches near their proud dwelling; let us leave not, if it be possible, aught that can tell the tale of destruction; let us overturn the very earth that it may swallow up the whites. Courage, then, brethren and friends, we shall go on conquering and to

* At seventeen quartes the *vara*: a Spanish measure which is nearly equivalent to an ell.

† Kill my father and I will kill yours. It is, in fact, understood that many mulattoes juggled in this manner with the crime of parricide, and were heard to pronounce the execrable words.

‡ The ancient name of St. Domingo, which signifies *great land*. The natives call it also Aity.

conquer; we shall triumph or we shall die! If conquerors, we shall enjoy, in our turn, all the joys of life; but if our hope be blasted, and if we die, what then? Why then we shall go to heaven, into the Eden above, where the saints expect us, and where every brave man shall receive a double measure of *aguardiente* and a *piastre gourde* a day!"

This military sermon, which to you appears simply ridiculous, produced a prodigious effect upon the rebels: sounder imaginations than theirs, indeed, might have been struck with it. Nor did the words form its most striking character; for the manner of the speaker, the gestures into which he threw himself, the convulsive grin which accompanied almost every sentence, his uplifted eyes and clasped hands, gave an indescribable power of prestige and fascination to the harangue. Not classing myself among his brethren or friends, perhaps I judged harshly, but I am inclined to think, impartially of him. In his physiognomy there appeared to me, at least, insincerity, triumph and cunning, combined with evident contempt for the credulous listeners, whose feelings he had succeeded in exciting, from the beginning to the end of the speech, by that wild and powerful eloquence so adapted to a savage auditory.

No burst of applause, no clashing of arms, immediately succeeded Biassou's address; but mute and immovable admiration for some minutes reigned throughout the army. But when their feelings did get vent, the yelling, the shrieking, the shouting, the groaning, the drumming, which simultaneously shook the air, is beyond description. Some beat their breasts; some clasped their clubs and sabres; and some, prostrate on their knees, presented an attitude of immovable ecstasy. Negresses tore their breasts and arms with fish-bones, which are their substitutes for combs; the music of guitars, tomtoms, drums and

balafas, struck by the enthusiastic negroes, mingled with the roar of artillery.

Biassou, whose vanity was amply gratified by the passing scene, now became weary of the ceaseless tumult, and made a sign which was instantaneously obeyed; for each negro resumed his place in his respective rank in silence, and in the twinkling of an eye. This discipline, into which Biassou had bent down his equals by the mere force of his mind and will, struck me with admiration. Every man of this army of rebels appeared to speak and move under the hand of the chief, like the keys of a harpsichord trembling to the touch of the musician.

CHAPTER XII.

I HAD thus had a specimen of the religion of the blacks, and of the eloquence of one of their principal leaders; and I perceived that I was now about to be initiated into the mysteries of their surgery.

As soon as the negroes had resumed their ranks, the Ouanga, who officiated at once as man of God and man of physic, began to examine the wounds of the patients, of whom there were not a few. Before commencing operations, however, he laid aside his sacerdotal garments, and employed a boy to carry behind him a large chest, which was divided into several compartments of various sizes, and in which were deposited his medicines and surgical instruments. He let blood very expertly with a fish-bone lancet; but was less adroit in the management of the pincers and of the clumsy machine which he used as an incision-knife.

His instruments, however, were seldom employed; his chief occupation being in prescribing and administering medicines, which were not of the most disagreeable description; but which would have had no salutary effect, in the opinion of the negroes at least, had they been unaccompanied by the blessings and mysterious signs of their attendant, whose *materia medica* consisted chiefly of rum, and a composition of the juice extracted from orange-wood or sarsaparilla. But his sovereign remedy was composed of different materials: it consisted of three glasses of

red wine, a little nutmeg-powder, and the yoke of an egg, baked upon the ashes. This specific was employed in every case of extremity, but, wonderful to tell, seldom effected a cure; and the sorcerer, in all probability, would have lost his popularity as a surgeon, if he had not wrought upon the imagination, and imposed upon the credulity of the poor blacks by his sanctified air, amazing deformity, and signs and ceremonies.

His mode of curing the body was even more fallacious than his ministerial services. Sometimes he merely performed some mystic signs over the poor sufferer; who, if he did recover, believed that he owed his life to the supernatural power of the *Ouanga*. At other times, using skilfully the remains of the old superstitions which mingled with their new catholicism, he would wrap a little fetish stone in lint, and put it into the wound; and the good effects of the lint were attributed to the virtue of the stone.

If he was informed of the death of any of his patients, his usual reply, delivered in a solemn tone, was to this effect—

“It is our duty to use every means in our power for the restoration of health; but before I applied the remedy, I knew very well he could not live, because, my friends, our unhappy brother was a traitor. During the late conflagration he delivered a white man from the flames, and he is dead. I should have been surprised had it been otherwise: heaven justly punishes every crime.” Thus did the *Ouanga* increase his reputation; and the negroes manifested their horror for the crime of the released sufferer, by cursing the whites and worshipping the doctor.

One of the more distinguished negroes had been severely wounded; and I was forcibly struck with the method the empiric adopted to cure him. After cleansing and dressing the wound to the best of his

power, he placed the patient before the altar, tore two or three leaves out of the missal, burnt them at the flames of the candles, which once ascended in holy tranquillity in the parish church of Acul. He then mixed a few drops of the wine which the chalice contained, with the ashes of the sacred paper, and commanded the wounded man to drink.

“For,” said he, “if you have not been guilty of some treacherous act, this will be your cure.” The deluded patient, fixing his eyes upon the juggler, whom he believed to be a being possessed of supernatural power, implicitly obeyed; the *Ouanga*’s hands were raised over him, as if to call down benedictions from heaven; he drank and was cured: the conviction that he was so forming, perhaps in itself, the means of cure.* His medical services were now at an end: the greater number of his patients were reaping the benefit of his attendance in the world of spirits, while the rest were clasping his knees, kissing his feet, and attributing the effects of their recovery to his supernatural agency. He had hitherto executed the offices of physician of the soul and physician of the body; but another scene now occurred, in which he was again the principal actor, and which increased the supernatural awe with which he was regarded.

The *Ouanga*, as soon as the last cure was effected, leapt upon the altar with incredible agility, sat down, wrapt his petticoat (which reminded me of Joseph’s coat of many colours) about his legs, and thus addressed the army:—

* This remedy is still often enough practised in Africa, particularly by the Moors of Tripoli, who throw into their draughts the ashes of a page of the book of Mahomet, and thus compose a philtre, to which they attach a sovereign virtue. An English traveller calls this ‘*the infusion of the Koran*’.

“*Hombres, escuchate! Hé estudiado la ciencia de los Gitanos.*”* Let those approach who would read in the book of fate the fortunes of their life.” The fortune-teller seemed likely to have sufficient opportunity for displaying his art; for a crowd of blacks and mulattoes rushed so impetuously towards him, that the altar was nearly overthrown.

“One at a time!” cried the sorcerer; “do you mean to rush in a body to the tomb?” His hollow and threatening voice, which sometimes fell like a familiar sound upon my ear, had an instantaneous effect upon the negroes. They fell back, in evident terror, tumbling heads over heels. At this moment a man of colour entered the cave hastily. He was dressed in a waistcoat and white trousers, and his head turbaned with a Madras handkerchief, in the manner of the wealthy colonists. His countenance expressed consternation and alarm; and he appeared to have something of importance to communicate to the generalissimo, who demanded, in a suppressed voice—

“Well, Rigaud, what is it? What is the matter?”

Rigaud was the leader of the united bands of the Cayes, the same who was afterwards known by the name of General Rigaud. His manner was engaging, his countenance prepossessing and mild; but his character, with which report had made me acquainted, was proud, cunning, and cruel.

I was placed so near Biassou, that I heard the whole of the following whispered conversation:—

“General,” said Rigaud, in reply to Biassou’s

* “Men, listen! I have studied the sciences of the Egyptians.” The meaning that the Spaniards attach to the word *hombre*, in this case, cannot be translated: it means more than *man*, and less than *friend*.

question, "Jean François has sent an emissary, who is just now at the limits of the camp, and who brings news of importance. Boukmann has lost his life in a skirmish with a party of the enemy, headed by M. de Touzard, and the whites have exposed his head as a trophy."

"Is that all?" replied Biassou. During the relation of his friend his eyes sparkled with delight, and he hid his mouth in his hand to conceal the smile that twisted his lips. I guessed the cause: the fewer chiefs there were the more his consequence would be enhanced.

"The emissary of Jean François," continued Rigaud, "has also another message for your ear."

"Good, good!" replied Biassou: "come, my dear Rigaud, leave off this affectation."

"But, general, have you really no fear for the effect which the news of Boukmann's fate will have on your army?"

"Bah! you are not so simple as you look. But I shall soon let you see what Biassou is. Only take care to detain the messenger without for about a quarter of an hour."

During this dialogue, the sorcerer was examining the foreheads and hands of the poor negroes with such an air of scrutiny, that many of them trembled. However, those who dropped into the silver gilt vessel which lay by the side of the sorcerer the largest, brightest, and best sounding pieces of money, were pretty sure of a happy futurity.

When the conference was ended, Biassou whispered something to the Ouanga, who heard it as if he heard it not, so intensely did he pretend to be interested in his metoposcopic operations.

"Happy are they," said he, "on whose foreheads, on the wrinkle of the sun, is a little triangular or square figure: they shall buy riches, station, and ho-

nour, without labour, without money, and without price.

“Let the man who has the figure of three S’s joined together on any part of his forehead take care that he keeps a good hold of *terra firma*, and never venture near or upon the water, or he will infallibly be drowned.

“Four lines striking out from the root of the nose, and bending back two by two on the forehead, is also a very fatal sign: whoever has the misfortune to possess it shall assuredly be taken prisoner of war, and shall groan in fetters in the hands of the stranger.”

Here the Ouanga paused.

“*Hombres!*” continued he: “these were the signs which I observed on the brow of Bug-Jargal, the renowned chief of the men of Morne Rouge; they were strongly marked upon his majestic forehead; and in his case, as well as in every other, my art has proved infallible.”

This speech was followed by the loud lamentations of a crowd of negroes, whose leaders wore scarlet drawers, and in whom I recognised the bands of the Morne Rouge. I had now nothing to expect from the clemency of Bug-Jargal, of whose imprisonment I was thus fully convinced.

The Ouanga continued—

“You who have, on the right side of the forehead, and on the line of the moon, a mark representing the figure of a pitchfork, beware of indolence and intemperance, or you will fare the worse. There is another little but not unimportant sign: it is the Arabic figure of three; the possessor of which may make up his mind to receive, one day of his life, a sound beating —”

Here he was interrupted by a poor old decrepid negro, who had been overlooked among the crowd of patients, and who most piteously implored him to ex-

amine his eye, which, indeed, presented a most melancholy spectacle: he had been wounded on the forehead, and his eye was streaming with blood.

When the Ouanga observed him—

“*Hombres!*” said he: “round figures on the right side of the forehead, and on the line of the moon, foretell diseases in the eyes. These signs,” continued he, addressing the wounded man, who was distracted with pain, “are only too visible upon your brow; but now show me your hand.”

“Alas! *excelentissimo señor,*” replied the sufferer, “*mir usted mi ojo.*”*

“*Fatras!*”† said the Ouanga, angrily, “what need have I to see thine eye? Thy hand, I say!”

The poor wretch mechanically raised his hand, murmuring always, “*mi ojo!*”

“Heavens!” said the sorcerer, “there is the very sign which I dreaded you possessed: the little point on the line of life, and surrounded by a circle. Friend! thou wilt lose one eye; thou must be blind of one eye.”

“*Ya le soi!*”‡ said the *Fatras*, with a groan; but the sorcerer, who was no longer a physician, repulsed him rudely, and went on with his more lucrative employment of fortune-telling.

“*Escuha te, hombres!* The man whose forehead is slightly marked with seven little crooked lines, or strokes, will be cut off in the prime of manhood. If any of you have on the line of the moon, and between your eyebrows the figure of two bent arrows, expect a bloody but a glorious death on the field of battle. If you bear upon the line of life, which crosses your hand, the figure of a cross, expect, not only a vio-

* Alas! my excellent lord, look at my eye.

† Old and superannuated negroes are distinguished by this name.

‡ I am so already.

lent death, but also that you will appear upon a scaffold."

Here the Ouanga made a momentary pause.

"*Hermanos*," added he, "allow me to inform you of what I have had great difficulty in acknowledging to myself, namely, that Boukmann, the high, the noble-minded, the powerful friend and supporter of liberty and independence, possesses these fatal signs. Were my prognostications not invariably verified I should be tempted to indulge the hope that I might be mistaken with regard to his fate; but alas! I fear—I fear ——"

The negroes greedily drunk in every word that the Ouanga uttered; and their eyes actually seemed as if they would have burst from their sockets when they heard the fate of Boukmann predicted. The juggler interchanged looks with Biassou, at a sign from whom one of the aid-de-camps immediately left the cavern.

"An open and contemptuous mouth," pursued the orator, while malicious triumph beamed in his eyes, "absent behaviour, arms hanging by the side, and the left hand turned outward without apparent motive, denote deficiency of intellect and a kind of fool-like curiosity."

Biassou's hyena giggle returned.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT this moment the aid-de-camp re-entered, bringing along with him a negro, whose torn and muddy clothes, and scratched and bloody hands and feet, proved that his journey had been long and hasty. He was the messenger of whose arrival Biassou had been informed by Rigaud.

In one hand he held a sealed packet, in the other an unfolded parchment, on which there was also a seal with the impression of a burning heart. In the middle the cypher was formed by the characteristic letters M and N, intertwined, no doubt, in order to indicate the union of the free mulattoes with the negro slaves. Below the cipher was this legend:—“Prejudice conquered; the rod of iron broken; long live the king!” This was a passport from Jean François.

The emissary, bowing to the ground, presented his despatches to the generalissimo, who greedily snatched them, broke open the letters which the packet contained, glanced over them, and pushed them all into his pocket except the last, which he dropt from his hand, so stunned did he pretend to be by its contents.

“*Gens du roi!*” cried he.

The negroes bent their heads.

“*Gens du roi!* listen to the sad tidings which Jean Biassou, generalissimo of the conquered countries, and

field-marshall of the armies of his catholic majesty, has received from Jean François, grand-admiral of France, and lieutenant-general of his said majesty, the king of Spain and the Indies.

“Boukmann, chief of those acknowledged independents, the one hundred and twenty maroons of the Blue Mountains of Jamaica, has fallen gloriously in the recent struggle of liberty and humanity against despotism and barbarism. In one of his errands of justice he encountered a party of the infamous Touzard’s brigands; a fierce contest ensued; Boukmann was killed, and the monsters have ignominiously exposed his head on a scaffold in the *place d’armes* of their city of the Cape! Vengeance! vengeance!”

Profound silence reigned throughout the army, every countenance expressed discouragement, disappointment and alarm; but at length the Ouanga leaping upon the altar and exultingly flourishing his white stick, exclaimed—

“I return you thanks, O Salomon, Zorobabel, Eléazar, Thaleb, Cardan, Judas, Bowtharicht, Averroës, Albert le Grand, Bohabdil, Jean de Hagen, Anna Baratro, Daniel Ogrumof, Rachel Flintz, Altornino, for my unerring fore-knowledge of the future destiny of man! the *ciencia* of the prophets has not deceived me:—*Hijos, amigos, hermanos, muchachos, mozos, madres, y vosotros todos qui me escuchais aqui*,* what did I predict? *que habeas dicho?* From the signs on Boukmann’s forehead I knew that he would die in battle; the signs upon his hand told me he would appear upon a scaffold; my prognostications are realised, they have always been faithful and true! and circumstances are arranged, as if of themselves, so as to produce events which no human ingenuity

* Sons, friends, brethren, young men, children, and mothers, and all who listen to me.

seemed able to bring together. The scaffold, and the field of battle!"

The late discouragement of the blacks was changed into a kind of terrified admiration and awe of the gifted Ouanga, who triumphantly strutted up and down the sugar-chest, which afforded sufficient room for his little but consequential steps. The rank and eloquence of Biassou were now comparatively forgotten; the negroes confounded him with themselves, whereas the sorcerer, in their opinion, was exalted above humanity. The contempt which all this time sat upon the countenance of Biassou, convinced me that he was only a pretended believer in the art of fortune-telling. He, however, advanced to the altar, and thus addressed the adept—

"Monsieur le Chapelain, since thou canst fathom the dark waters of futurity, it is our pleasure that thou foretellest our future destiny to us, Jean Biassou, *mariscal de campo.*"

The Ouanga stopped proudly on the altar, where the credulity of the blacks had made him an object of worship.

"*Venga, vuestra merced,*"* said he to the *mariscal de campo.*

At this moment the Ouanga was the most important man in the whole army: the military yielded to the sacerdotal power. Biassou obeyed, but apparently not with a very good grace.

"Thy hand, general," said the Ouanga, stooping to take hold of it—"Empezo.† The line of the joint, which is equally marked in all its length, is a proof that thou wilt arrive at great riches and happiness. The four lines that cross diametrically the joint are signs that thou wilt enjoy honour and dig-

* Come, your grace.

† I begin.

nity. Ah! general, how happy are thy prospects: I see by the line of life, which is long and deeply marked, that thy life will be exempt from the evils common to humanity, and that thou wilt die in a ripe old age. The line of life is also straight; that signifies thy naturally strong intellect, good understanding, activity, and ingenuity of mind, and the *generosidad* of thy heart. Thou must, indeed, be one of Fortune's most peculiar favourites; for here is a crowd of little wrinkles, which form the appearance of a great tree, the weight of whose branches have borne it to the ground, and which the *chiromancers* assert to be the happiest of all signs. The line of health is very long, and besides confirming the signs of the line of life, it likewise indicates courage: I also observe that it is bent towards the little finger, forming a kind of hook. General, it is a sign of useful severity."

The sparkling eyes of the Ouanga were fixed upon me as he pronounced these last words. I could have sworn I knew the expression; but, for my life, I could not say when or where I had seen it: as for the voice, it sounded like one I had been accustomed to hear in happier days, but in louder and merrier strains.

"These little circles," continued the Ouanga, in his usual tone and manner, "with which the line of health is loaded, denotes many necessary executions that must take place by thy orders; the line of health also denotes, from the circular form it assumes towards the middle, that thou wilt be exposed to peril and death from ferocious beasts, I mean the whites, unless they are speedily exterminated. The line of fortune is surrounded like the line of life, with little branches spreading towards the wrist, and confirms the height of power and supremacy with which thy futurity will be fraught. Its straight and taper point denotes thy distinguished views of discipline, and com-

plete knowledge of the art of governing. The fifth line is in a triangular form, and extends towards the root of the middle finger; that ensures thee successful fortune in every enterprise which thou mayst undertake; but let us turn our attention more minutely to the fingers. These little lines which extend from the nail of the thumb to the joint, signify that thou wilt be heir to a great inheritance. It will be Boukmann's glory and power, I presume," added the Ouanga, raising his voice; "honours and dignities will also fall to thy happy lot, for the root of thy forefinger is covered with slight wrinkles. I can prognosticate nothing from the appearance of the middle finger; but thy ring-finger is furrowed with crooked lines, crossing and recrossing one another: thou wilt conquer and rule over thy enemies, and trample over thy rivals: these crooked lines, forming the cross of St. Andrew, denote thy prudence, accuracy of judgment, and natural ingenuity; the joint which unites the little finger with the hand, is marked with lines and wrinkles; there can be no check to thy prosperity: in the midst of these little lines and wrinkles there is a circle, which confirms the power and dignity to which thou art called. 'Happy is that man,' says Eleasar Thaleb, 'who possesses all these signs; he need dread no trials; his sky will be always serene; he will inhale an ever-fresh and invigorating atmosphere; fortune hails him as her favourite son; rank, riches, and happiness, are what his propitious destiny has in store for him, and the ever bright star of his fate shall herald him glory and honour.' Now, general, permit me to examine thy forehead; I shall surely discover something there calculated to humble the almost pardonable pride with which the possessor of so many advantages must be inspired. Good heavens! the same ever and anon! here is the little square figure in the middle of thy forehead,

which Rachel Flintz, the Bohemian, says, will assuredly bring the possessor a great fortune. Here is a little sign of the same description, but rather to the right part of the forehead, which exactly corroborates the lines on thy thumb; we shall have another Boukmann in General Jean Biassou. The figure of a horseshoe, which I perceive between thy eyebrows, proves thy laudable determination to be avenged on thy enemies, and on that tyranny and oppression under which our race has so long lingered. I, myself, possess this sign in a very conspicuous degree."

The impressive manner in which the sorcerer, glancing upon me, pronounced these last words, struck me forcibly, though I could assign no reason for it.

"If thou examinest," continuued the foretelling orator, "the foreheads of the brave men who have meditated and effected revolutions, and who have broken in battle the chains of servitude and oppression, thou wilt perceive that the sign of the lion's claw is strongly marked upon their foreheads. Thou hast it just over thy eyebrows, and it proves thy innate courage. Thy forehead presents, general, what are considered the most positive of all proofs of prosperity: namely, a coalition of lines which form the letter M, the beginning of the name of the mother of God; whatever part of the forehead, or on whatever line this letter may be, it invariably preludes glory and power; its possessor will ensure the triumph of whatever cause he may embrace. Happy they who are under his authority! unconquered, they shall conquer, and never know defeat; prize, then, this sign, thou chosen of destiny, it will yield thee honour, and glory, and power."

"*Gratias!*" said Biassou, perceiving that this was the finale; and preparing to resume his seat on his

mahogany throne; he was obliged, however, to undergo a renewed examination; for the Ouanga hailed him back with the utmost strength of his lungs, and as if the general had been a mile distant,

“I forgot,” said the indefatigable fortune-teller, resuming his dignified manner and tone, “to examine the line of the sun upon your forehead. What! still good; I discover from it that thou knowest how to live, and why thou livest; that thy chief desire is to make all around thee happy; that thou hast a most disinterested and profusely liberal mind; that thou hast a great propensity towards magnificence and show.”

Biassou immediately defined the stratagem of the Ouanga, and perceived that the forgetfulness was not on his side, but on his own: he accordingly, in order to confirm the munificence indicated by the line of the sun, threw into the silver plate a tolerably heavy purse.

The dazzling horoscope of the chief produced the desired effect upon the army: excess of enthusiasm succeeded the late general discouragement of the rebels, whose confidence in the prognostications of their Ouanga was confirmed by the death of Boukmann, and who now began furiously to shout, much to the gratification of the two distinguished personages, “Long life to the Ouanga! Long life to Biassou!” The Ouanga and Biassou looked at one another; and I thought I heard the stifled laugh of the former respond to the hyena giggle of the latter.

I could not define why this veiled piece of deformity continually haunted my imagination. When I reviewed the past, a figure like his flitted before me, but I could not determine who or what he was; and I gratified the unaccountable desire which I had to speak with him, by accosting him thus—

“Monsieur l’Ouanga, *senor cura, doctor medico,*

monsieur le chapelain, *bon per!*" said I. He turned round abruptly.*

* Even in regenerated St. Domingo the same kind of character is found. Papa Miguel is a living descendant of the veiled Ouanga.

At a sort of village of the Plain du Nord resides Papa Miguel, a remarkable personage; one who, in central Africa, would be called a Marabout, or holy man. He is a native of Bambarra; and being an instructed Mahomedan, had officiated in his country as a *jighi* or teacher, a writer of charms, and a physician to boot. Fifty-eight years ago, just previous to the time when the treaty of the limit was concluded between France and Spain, by which the frontiers of St. Domingo and Hispaniola were settled, he passed from the Spanish to the French colony. Preserving, through all the scenes of the revolution, his character of sanctity and his reputation as a curer of diseases and a maker of charms, he had lived always with great influence, either respected through dread of his supposed supernatural power, or honoured through reverence of his religious character. His usual dress is a white robe and scarlet cap. He wears the beard on his chin, and walks with a white wand. On the evening we called at his village we learned that he had gone as far as Sans Souci, to officiate about the person of a sick man, but would be back on the following day. On the following day, therefore, we revisited his village. His house, a little cottage on the summit of a small hillock, looks down on some well-cultivated grounds, which his crazy followers till for him. He lives with the license of his faith, and has many wives. Some of his women were seated at the door, but rose on our arrival, to call their magician-master, who came gliding to us with a hasty and noiseless step: a little, infirm, and withered old man, of a brown complexion, dressed in a check smock and trousers, with a red cap covering his crisp and gray hairs. He extended to us, in quick succession, his hand, with familiar confidence, muttered a salutation in Arabic, but so rapidly tripped on the tongue that it was not possible to hear whether it was the declaratory *illa-cl-illah*, &c. or the *salaam* of *engenboron*: the usual salutation to strangers. Finding that we treated him with respect, he gave us an evidence of his learning by bring-

“There is still one,” said I, “whose futurity you have not yet foretold, and that is I. The sorcerer heard me; but, crossing his arms upon the silver sun which hung from his breast, remained in stately silence.

“I wish to know,” pursued I, “what you read in the star of my fate; but, unfortunately, your honest comrades have carried off my purse and my watch, and I fear you are not one to tell fortunes gratis.” I had scarcely uttered these words when he advanced, and, in a hollow whisper—

“Therein thou art mistaken,” said he; “hold out thy hand.”

I obeyed, steadfastly examining the expression of his flashing eyes.

ing some large folio manuscripts in Arabic, from which he read remedies for diseases made of the simples of the country, things that he had recorded during the years of his experience. He has a shrewd, intelligent countenance. As none consulted him but with the solid testimony of a confidence in his skill by a present of some kind, his little farm exhibited a goodly stock of cattle: the donations of faith. He spoke of milch cows and honey forming special articles of his diet; and, as an evidence of his Mahommedan abhorrence of swine's flesh, which he mentioned, we saw no hogs about any of the village premises.

It is no evidence of cunning, whatever it may be of delusion, that the medical skill of Papa Miguel is efficacious only by the aid of charms. In the narrative of all African travellers, and throughout the east, it is a characteristic of his Arabian lore that cures should be so wrought. I dare say he has implicit confidence in his own remedies only, when all his ridiculous farrago of superstition is attached to them, and feels with honest simplicity that none ought to seek him but with a credulity equal to his own. We can scarcely deny him the possession of benevolence more than of self-interest, when we see his coterie of retainers more of the infirm in mind and body than of the young and vigorous. Perhaps they are all descendants of Bambarra or Mandingo parents.

“There are two little transversal lines,” said he, “which cross the middle of the line of life: that is a sign of approaching death. Believe me, thy death is near.

“When the line of health is not exactly in the middle of the hand, and when the line of life and the line of health are united, so as to form a triangle, then death is not only near, but will present itself in an unnatural form: these signs are on thy hand; thou wilt not die a natural death.

“The under-joint of thy fore-finger is crossed from one end to the other by a line; and that is positive proof that thou wilt die a violent death. Dost thou hear? Prepare to die a violent death!”

While announcing, with his sepulchral voice, the tidings at which the heart of man naturally revolts, his whole demeanour betrayed malicious joy; but I listened with indifference and contempt to the prognostications, which I verily believed were to be accomplished.

“Sorcerer!” said I, “I perceive you have not mistaken your trade. In my case, you prophesy a certainty.”

He drew still nearer me, and looking in my face—

“So,” said he, “thou doubtest of my science? but wait; listen still. I know from the line of the sun upon thy forehead being broken, that thou takest an enemy for a friend, and a friend for an enemy.” It immediately struck me that he must have been acquainted with part of my unhappy history; for to whom could he allude but to the perfidious Pierrot, who, in return for my friendship and confidence, carried off my wife; and to Habibrah, whom I had despised and hated, but whose heroic greatness of mind shone so conspicuously in the hour of danger?

“What do you mean?” cried I.

“What I have said, I have said. I have now read

thy dark, dark horoscope; and, in order to convince thee that I am no deceiver, I shall tell thee a few of the occurrences of thy past life. The line of the moon is slightly bent upon thy forehead, and from that I know that thou weepest over an irretrievable loss; namely, that of thy wife, who was carried off before thine eyes.” I was in the act of springing towards him, but that was not so easily accomplished; two iron arms kept me firmly on my seat.

“Be patient,” continued the Ouanga; “I shall soon have finished. The bend on the line of the moon represents the form of a cross, and that tells me, moreover, that thy wife was taken away from thee the very night of thy marriage.”

“Villain!” cried I, “you are privy to the plot; you know where she is; tell me instantly who you are!” I desperately struggled to get hold of his veil; but no: frantic with rage and disappointment, I was obliged to yield to numbers.

“Thou believest now?” said the Ouanga, maliciously; “prepare thyself for a near and violent death!”

CHAPTER XIV

WITH what a variety of events this day had been fraught! My mind was again put on the rack regarding the fate of my wife. How tantalizing, to be sitting pinioned in a corner, three yards distant from one who, if not by calmer means, might at least be forced to unravel the mystery by the efficacy of my own arm and sword! I was indeed so enervated by the scene succeeding the comedies which had acted so powerfully upon the imaginations of the negroes, that I actually feared I should relapse into a fever: however, the mind of man, when properly trained, generally rises in proportion to the greatness of the trial.

Biassou had resumed his seat; his prime minister, the fortune-teller, occupied the velvet cushion on his right hand, while Rigaud reclined on the one on his left; the Ouanga, with his arms crossed upon his breast, seemed wrapped in profound meditation, and the other two chewed tobacco in silence.

In a little while an aid-de-camp advanced to receive the commands of the *mariscal de campo*, regarding the arrangement of the army, when a tumultuous noise was heard at the entrance of the grotto, where three parties of negroes had arrived, each of which escorted a prisoner, whom they remitted to the disposal of Biassou. From the cries of 'Death! death!' I understood that they merely brought them hither, not to inquire if they should die, but merely to ascer-

tain in what manner the general chose that they should be put to death.

The parties chiefly consisted of English negroes, formerly belonging to the troops of Boukmann, and who had already come to join the ranks of Biassou, which were chiefly composed of French and Spanish blacks.

Silence was immediately restored by a signal from the *mariscal de campo*, who ordered the prisoners to advance. Not a little struck, I recognised two of them. One was the humane citizen-general, who corresponded with all the negrophiles in the world, and who had proposed massacring the negroes who had not then joined in the common revolt; the other was the planter, whose aversion to the mulattoes was so universal, but who, notwithstanding, had the mortification to be numbered among that race himself. I concluded that the third belonged to the class of *petits blancs*, from his leather apron, and sleeves tucked up above his elbows. The whole three had fled for refuge to the mountains, but had been discovered, seized, and brought to Biassou's headquarters, which answered not only for a chapel, a surgery, and a juggler's stage, but also for a judgment-hall.

The *petit blanc* was first examined.

“Who art thou?” said Biassou.

“I am James Belin,” promptly replied the prisoner, “carpenter to the Hospital of the Fathers at the Cape.” Scarcely had his interrogatory been answered, than the blood mounted into the face of the generalissimo of the conquered countries, and shame, confusion, and rage marked his features.

“James Belin!” said he, biting his lips, and seemingly endeavouring to recollect the name.

“Yes, just James Belin,” returned the carpenter. “One would think you did not know me!”

“One would think that thou art an unmannerly dog,” said the chief with a frown. “Before beginning thy defence thou must respectfully recognise and salute me.”

“Salute thee! I never salute my slaves!”

“Thy slave, wretch!” thundered the generalissimo.

“Yes, my slave, Jean Biassou! Nay, do not frown, nor pretend ignorance of my face. Do you not recollect that I sold you for thirteen piastres-gourdes to a Domingo merchant?” Shame and rage distorted the features of Biassou, and choked his utterance.

“What!” pursued the *petit blanc*, “are you ashamed of having served me? Ought you not rather to consider it a high honour to have belonged to James Belin? Your mother, the old fool, has often swcpt my shop; but I have now sold her to monsieur the major-domo of the hospital of the Fathers, although she is so miserably decrepid, that—guess what money I was offered for her? Why, only thirty-two livres and six sous! There is the history of Jean Biassou, generalissimo of the conquered countries, and of his mother, in a trice! And yet you have become proud, you negro fellows and mulattoes, and pretend to forget the time when you thought it an honour to serve on your knees Master James Belin, carpenter of the Cape!”

Biassou had only interrupted him by his usual infernal giggle, which gave him the air of a tiger.

“Good!” said he, when the carpenter had finished; and then turning to the negroes who had brought in the audacious, prisoner: “Provide yourselves,” said he, “with two tressels, two planks, and a saw, and away with this man. James Belin of the Cape, return me thanks for giving thee the death of a carpenter!”

He ended this speech with a laugh, which explained

the dreadful manner in which the pride of his former master was to be punished. I shuddered, but James Belin remained unmoved, and proudly replied—

“I do thank you, Biassou; I have cause to thank you; for I bought you for thirty piastres, and thy services repaid me ten-fold.”

He was dragged away.

The two remaining prisoners had listened, more dead than alive, to this frightful prologue to their own tragedy. Pale as marble, they trembled from top to toe, and appeared as humble as the best trained and most submissive slaves.

Biassou evidently enjoyed the agony too manifest in the deportment of the prisoners; and he looked as if he would have penetrated into their very hearts. His usual sneer finished the survey. In order to prolong their agonising suspense, he began talking to Rigaud about the different qualities of tobacco; asserting, as his opinion, that what was exported from Havanna was only good for smoking in cigars, whereas he never tasted better snuff than the Spanish kind, of which he had been presented with two barrels by the deceased Boukmann, taken from M. Lebatu, proprietor of the island of Tortue.

“What is thy opinion?” said he, abruptly addressing the citizen-general, who was so startled by the suddenness of the question, that he replied stammeringly—

“I defer, general, to the opinion of your excellency.”

“No flattery!” replied Biassou. “I ask to know thy opinion, not my own. Dost thou know better snuff than M. Lebatu’s?”

“No, I do not, mouseigneur,” said C——, with whose embarrassment Biassou seemed greatly delighted.

“But what means all this? General! excellency!

monseigneur! Why, thou art an aristocrat!" said Biassou, apparently in a passion.

"Oh no, indeed!" cried the citizen-general. "I am a good patriot of the ninety-one, and a fervent negrophile!"

"Negrophile! What is a negrophile?" interrupted the generalissimo.

"Why, it is—it is—" stammered the citizen, "a friend to the blacks."

"It is too limited a signification that," said the Sacrata chief; "so thou art not a friend to men of colour?"

"It is men of colour I meant to say," answered the negrophile, submissively; and in proof of that, I am connected with all the most famous partizans of the negroes and mulattoes——"

"Negroes and mulattoes!" exclaimed Biassou. "Dost thou come here to insult us with these vile and odious names, which thy race has invented in token of contempt of ours? Know, sirrah, that we are men of colour and blacks! Do you understand, monsieur le colon?"

"Pardon, pardon me, monseigneur! I did not mean to offend. It is merely a bad habit, contracted in childhood, which I have not yet conquered," replied the unfortunate citizen C——.

"Let alone thy monseigneur. I repeat that I love not such aristocratic forms."

Poor C—— again attempted to vindicate himself.

"Ah! citizen," he began; "if you only knew me——" but Biassou prevented him from finishing the sentence.

"Citizen! citizen!" cried he in a rage; "what does the fellow mean, or for whom does he take me? Thy jacobinical jargon grates upon my ear still worse than thy aristocratic: is it that thou art absolutely a jacobin? Dost thou forget that thou speakest to the

generalissimo of the conquered countries? Citizen! insolent!"

The poor negrophile was at his wits' end. In what way was he to address this man, who rejected alike the titles of monseigneur and citizen, the language of the aristocrats and the patriots?

C—— was overwhelmed. His situation was truly distressing; and Biassou, whose anger was only pretended, cruelly enjoyed his embarrassment.

"Alas!" ventured at length the citizen-general, "you judge too harshly of me, noble defender of the imprescriptible rights of one-half of the human race!" Since every title with which he had hitherto addressed the chief had met with an equal rebuff, he tried the success of one of those sonorous periphrases, so generally substituted by the revolutionists for the name and title of the personage whom they address. He imagined that by this speech he had fairly tickled the ear of the chief, who made the following reply—

"So thou lovest the blacks and the mulattoes, dost thou?"

"Love them? that I do!" cried citizen C——, with enthusiasm. "Do I not correspond with Brissot, and —?" He was cut short in the catalogue of names which he meant to repeat, by Biassou's characteristic laugh.

"Capital!" said he; "I am quite delighted to find in thee a friend and supporter of our cause. Then thou joinest with us in execrating the colonists, who have inflicted the most cruel punishments upon us for our just insurrection? It is not we who are the rebels: it is thy execrable race, who have rebelled against nature and humanity. Join with me in execrating the whites, and I shall know that thou art a friend to the blacks."

"I do execrate them!" cried he.

"Good!" said Biassou; "and now, what thinkest

thou of the man (I suppose thou hast heard the story) who, in order to check the rebellion, planted fifty slaves' heads on the avenue approaching to his house?"

A cold perspiration broke upon the citizen-general, and the paleness of death sat upon his countenance.

"And what thinkest thou of the man who proposed surrounding the city of the Cape with a cordon of negro heads?"

"Pardon! pardon!" cried the terrified citizen-general.

"Do I threaten thee? Allow me to proceed," said Biassou, coldly. "Who would have surrounded the city from Fort Picolet to the Barrier Bouteille?* What thinkest thou of that? Ha! answer?"

Biassou's expression, "Do I threaten thee?" had given C—— some hope; for although the generalissimo was doubtless acquainted with the facts, it seemed as if he might be ignorant of their author. He accordingly replied with some degree of firmness, and in order to prevent suspicion—

"It is impossible to deny that they are atrocious crimes."

"Very good!" said Biassou, *ricanant*;† "and what punishment wouldest thou think severe enough to inflict upon the guilty?"

* In the original, "from Fort Picolet to Cape Caracol;" but this would not form a line round the city; Cape Caracol being some miles down the coast, and on the wrong side for that purpose. Fort Picolet and the Barrier Bouteille are the extreme north and south points of the city.

† This word describes the "hyena laugh" of the generalissimo: a convulsion without mirth, which may be compared to the ghastly grin that decorates a human skull. We have no equivalent in English, and nothing near it. Why not adopt the French word?

What could the wretched man reply to such a question? He hesitated and stammered.

“Why dost thou hesitate?” said Biassou. “I thought thou hadst announced thyself a friend to the blacks.” Of two alternatives the negrophile chose the least threatening; and observing nothing hostile for himself in the eyes of Biassou, he answered in a weak voice—

“The guilty merits death.”

“Very well,” answered Biassou, quietly spitting out his quid of tobacco.

His indifferent yet rather complaisant manner began to light up the countenance of the poor negrophile with a ray of hope; but in order to dismiss any lurking suspicions regarding himself, he thought it necessary to say—

“There are none who have more ardently wished for the triumph of your cause than myself. It has been the subject both of my thoughts and my prayers. I correspond with Brissot and Pruneau de Pomme Gouge in France, Magan in America, Peter Paulus in Holland, the Abbot Tamburini in Italy—” God knows how long he would have prolonged this philanthropic litany, with which he had, on another occasion, entertained the gentlemen assembled to debate on the best means of quelling the insurrection, had he not been interrupted by Biassou’s—

“What nonsense is this? what do I care for thy correspondents? But this I shall tell thee: I am most particularly anxious to know where are thy storehouses and thy dépôts; for my army has need of supplies. Thy plantations I believe are fertile, and yield abundance; and the business of thy commercial house must of course be extensive, since thou seemest to correspond with all the merchants in the world.”

Here Citizen C—— timidly ventured to insinuate, but in the softest and politest terms—

“Hero of humanity! it is not merchants with whom I am connected: it is with philanthropists, philosophers, and negrophiles.”

“The devil!” said Biassou, tossing his head; “here he comes again with his unintelligible words: speak plain, man! Ah! well, since thou hast neither chests nor storehouses to pillage, of what use art thou?”

His countenance brightening with hope, C—— quickly answered the last question—

“Illustrious warrior!” said he, “have you an economist in your army?”

“Economist! what is that?”

“It is—” replied the prisoner, with as much emphasis as fear would permit, “an economist: a political economist is a person who is absolutely necessary; it is he alone who appreciates, according to their respective value, the resources of an empire; who classes them in the order of their importance, augments and improves them by uniting their sources with their results, and distributes them like so many fruitful streams running into the great river of general utility, which enlarges in its turn the vast sea of public prosperity.”

“*Caramba!* what the devil does he mean by these words strung together like the beads of your chaplet?”

The Ouanga, whom he had addressed, shrugged his shoulders in token of ignorance and disdain.

“I have studied,” continued the citizen-general notwithstanding—“deign to bear with me a little longer, valiant chief of the brave regenerators of St. Domingo—I have studied the renowned economists, Turgot, Raynal, and Mirabeau, who is justly styled the friend of men. I have reduced their theories to practice; I am minutely acquainted with the science indispensable to the government of kingdoms, states, —”

"The economist is not economical in words," interrupted Rigaud, with his mild but arch smile.

"What dost thou mean, babbler?" cried Biassou; "havc *I* kingdoms or states to govern?"

"Not yet," said the sycophant; "but wait a little. Besides, my science descends, without losing dignity, to the details useful in the administration of an army."

"I do not administer my army, monsieur le plan-teur; I command it," said Biassou, haughtily.

"Oh! very well," said C——; "you will be the general and I can be the intendant. I can be of use to you in more ways than one; I am intimately acquainted with the rearing and breeding of cattle."

"But we do not breed our cattle; we eat them," said Biassou, *ricanant*; "and when the cattle belonging to the French colony become scarce, I have abundance of other resources, like thy political economists. I shall cross the frontier mountains, and scour the plains of the Cotuy, of the Vega, of St. Jago, and the banks of the Yuna, and in the morning they shall say, 'Where are our sheep and oxen?' If I find it expedient, I can still go to seek those that feed in the peninsula of Samana and graze beyond the mountain of Cibaos. Besides, I shall be charmed to be in the way to punish those infernal Spanish planters, the scoundrels who gave up our Ogé. In short, thou seest we are not likely to be in any embarrassment for lack of supplies, and that we can rub on very tolerably well without thy *indispensable* science."

This frank declaration disconcerted the poor economist, who, however, clinging like a drowning man to a straw, made yet another grasp.

"But my knowledge," said he, "is not confined to the rearing of cattle; I shall teach you how to obtain from the bowels of the earth that most useful of all commodities, coal."

“What signifies that to me?” said Biassou; “when I have need of fuel I burn three leagues of forest.”

“Well,” pursued the prisoner, “I can teach you to what purpose every kind of wood should be appropriated: the *chicaron* and the *sabiecca* for the keels of ships; the *yabas* for the bow; the *tocumas* for the ribs; the *hacamas*, the *gaiacs*, the cedars, the *aco-mas*, ——”*

“*Que te lleven todos los demonios de los diez-y-siete infiernos!*”† cried Biassou, overwhelmed.

“What is your pleasure, my gracious patron?” said the trembling economist, who did not understand the Spanish.

“Listen!” resumed Biassou: “I have no need of ships, and there is only one vacant post in my retinue. It is not that of major-domo, but of valet-de-chambre: if it suits thy taste, accept it, *senor filosofo*, and here are the terms of agreement: thou shalt serve me faithfully and submissively, always taking care to have my pipe, *calalou*,‡ and soup, in readiness when I shall please to call for them. Besides all that, thou shalt carry behind me a fan of peacock and parrot-feathers like those two pages there. Well, wilt thou be my valet-de-chambre or not?”

Citizen C—— bowed himself to the ground, with a thousand demonstrations of gratitude and joy.

“My offer is accepted then?” said Biassou.

“Could you think for a moment, my most generous master, that I should hesitate about accepting so signal an honour as that of serving your person?”

* The *tocuma*, a medlar-tree, and the cedar, are trees of St. Domingo; but the other names are unknown there. Why should not the reader be puzzled as well as Biassou?

† May all the devils of the seventeen hells seize thee!

‡ A creole ragout, made of the mucilaginous fruit of a plant very much resembling the hollyhock.

At this reply, the grotto rung with Biassou's boisterous, contemptuous, and triumphant laughter. Crossing his arms, he exultingly rose from his seat; and spurning the prostrate white with his foot, he cried with a loud voice—

“I am happy to have had an opportunity of inquiring how far the cowardice of the whites could go, after having so well ascertained the limits of their cruelty. It is to thee, citizen C_____, I owe this double proof. I know thee! what an ass thou must be not to have perceived it! It is thou who wast the presiding demon of the punishments of June, July, and August. It is thou who didst plant in the avenues of thy house fifty negro heads upon the palm-trees. It is thou who didst propose to cut the throats of five hundred blacks, remaining in chains after the revolt, and to gird about the city of the Cape with a cordon of the heads of slaves, extending from Fort Picolet to the Barrier Bouteille! Thou wouldst have made, hadst thou been able, a trophy of my own head; and now thou wouldst esteem thyself only too happy to become my valet-de-chambre! No, no; I have more care of thy honour than thou hast, therefore I will spare thee this affront. Prepare to die!”

He made a sign, and the blacks deposited near me the unhappy negrophile, who had fallen at his feet like one struck with thunder.

CHAPTER XV.

“It will be thy turn presently,” said Biassou to the remaining prisoner, who was the planter suspected by the whites of belonging to the race of mulattoes, and who, for that insult, sent me a challenge.

Trembling with terror, the unhappy man was about to make a reply, when the grotto resounded with the cries of “*Muerte! muerte!*” “Death! death!”

“*Touyé! touyé!*” shouted the negroes, grinding their teeth, and extending their curved fingers to the captive.

“General!” said a mulatto, expressing himself more intelligibly than the others, “he is a white man, of course he must die.”

The voice of the planter at length became audible.

“Not so, general,” cried he; “it is a base calumny. No, my brethren, I am not a white man; I am a mulatto; a *sang-melé*, like yourselves, and the son of a negress, like your mothers and sisters!”

“He lies!” said the infuriated negroes; “he is a white man, and has always despised the blacks and the men of colour.”

“Never!” exclaimed the prisoner; “I tell you I am one of yourselves; it is the whites whom I detest. I have always said with you, *nègre cé blan; blan cé nègre.*” *

* A popular saying among the revolted negroes, meaning “the negroes are the whites, the whites are the negroes,” al-

“It is false!” cried the multitude; “*touyé blan! touyé blan!*” The unhappy man continued, piteously exclaining—

“No, no, my dear brethren; believe me, I am one of yourselves; I am, indeed, a mulatto!”

“The proof!” said Biassou, coldly.

“The proof!” replied the prisoner, scarcely knowing what he said; “the proof is, that I have always been despised by the whites.”

“That may be true, yet no proof at all,” replied Biassou.

“It is true enough that the whites despise thee,” said a young *sang-melé*, addressing himself to the planter; “and thou, in turn, professedst to despise that race among which they account thee: nay it is even reported that thou foughtest a duel with a white man, for having one day reproached thee with belonging to our caste.”

The shouts of the indignant multitude followed this speech, and their violent and determined cries of “Death! death!” drowned the defence of the poor planter, who, with a look to me of disappointment and entreaty, repeated, weeping—

“It is a calumny! I have no other glory and honour than that of belonging to the blacks; I am a mulatto!”

“If thou wert, indeed, one of us, thou wouldest not use the word mulatto,” observed Rigaud, calmly.*

“Alas! my dear sir, I am so confused, I do not know what I am saying: but, Monsieur le General, I shall give you an undeniable proof that I am a *sang-*

though the sense would be better rendered thus; “the negroes are the masters, the whites are the slaves.”

* Men of colour hoot at the name of mulatto; a word, they say, invented by the whites to signify their contempt for the blacks.

melé. Do you observe," addressing himself to Biassou, and stretching out his hand, "the black circle round my nails?"*

"Nonsense!" said Biassou scornfully; "apply to the chaplain there, who understands signs. But hear me, friend. Some of our people accuse thee of being a white man, others of being a false brother, which is worse: if either of them is true, thou must die! In the mean time, thou maintainest that thou belongeth to our race, and that thou hast never denied it. Well, there is only one way for thee to prove the boast, and to save thy life."

"What, my general? what is it? I am ready," said the planter overjoyed.

"This is it," said Biassou: "take this dagger, and stab, with thy own hand, those two white prisoners," pointing to citizen C—— and myself.

The planter drew back in horror, as Biassou, with an infernal smile, presented the dagger to him.

"What!" said the chief, "thou hesitatatest? Art thou a white or a black man? Come, decide quickly, my time is precious; but thy acceptance or non-acceptance of my proposal will indubitably prove whether thou art or art not one of us."

The negrophile, in the mean time, who had remained plunged in a dark and stupid despair, looked on the scene passing between the planter and the generalissimo, so absorbed in the terrors of his own fate, that he did not appear to comprehend it. The last words of Biassou, however, appeared to affect him in some manner, although without absolutely awakening him, and he turned a dull yet scared look upon the *sang-melé*.

* Some *sang-melés* actually possess this mark at the root of the nails. It is effaced as they grow old, but it is seen again on their children.

As for him, his eyes were fixed upon the dagger, as if by the power of fascination. His hand was pointed towards it; a cold sweat stood upon his pale face; but he did not move. Gradually, however, almost imperceptibly, he glided towards the object of his horror. Not a whisper was heard in the assembly; and as the ghastly figure advanced, as noiselessly as a shadow, to the visible sign and image of murder, the spectators might have thought that they beheld a spectre-corpse.

Suddenly the apparition stopped; the arm fell; he turned away his head; and a visible shudder ran through his frame.

“What ho!” cried Biassou, and his shout broke the stillness of the scene like a clap of thunder. “Choose at once; kill, or die!”

The colonist stood immoveable, as if he had been petrified on the spot.

“Well,” said Biassou, “since he does not choose to be the executioner, he must be the victim! This proves that he is a white; away with him men of colour!”

The blacks advanced to seize the colonist; and this motion determined his choice between giving and receiving death, between murdering and being murdered.

He clutched suddenly the dagger, still offered by the tempter-fiend, and without thinking for a moment on what he was about to do, threw himself like a tiger on C——, who was seated beside me.

The citizen had watched, with a dull and stupid gaze, the motions of his assailant, which he dreaded without comprehending; but when he felt the assassin’s gripe at his throat, and saw the steel glittering in his eyes, awakened by the instinct of self-preservation, he caught hold of his arm in time to arrest the blow.

“Mercy! mercy!” he shrieked. “What are you going to do to me? What have I done?”

“You must die, sir!” said the *sang-melé*, not less agitated, and trying to disengage his arm, while he fixed his wild eyes upon those of the victim; “you must die! let me strike; I will do you no harm!”

“Die!” said the economist, “and by your hand? Why so, in the name of God? Is it out of revenge for my once having called you a *sang-melé*? It was a lie! You are a white, spare me, and I shall proclaim through the whole world that you are a white!”

The negrophile was unlucky in his mode of entreaty.

“Silence, wretch!” cried the *sang-melé*, terrified lest the negroes should overhear him; but the other only raised his voice the louder, screaming that he knew him to be a white, and of a good stock.

The *sang-melé* made a last effort to silence him; and tearing away violently the hand which restrained his motions, plunged the dagger through the clothing of the citizen. When C—— felt the point of the steel, he seized his assailant’s arm with his teeth, and tore it furiously.

“Villain! monster! assassin!” cried he. And then turning a look towards Biassou—

“Help! help!” he shrieked. “Avenger of humanity!” but the murderer, leaning with all his force upon the dagger, the blood burst over his hand, and sprang even upon his face. The knees of the unhappy negrophile bent suddenly beneath him; his hands relaxed their hold; his eyes grew dim; his lips emitted a hollow groan; and he fell dead upon the spot.

Horror-struck, I had witnessed this scene of murder, and I now momentarily expected that I should be called upon to play my part in the fiendish tragedy. The “avenger of humanity” had contemplated the

death struggle with an unchanged eye; and when the mortal conflict was over, he ordered, with stoical indifference, his terror-frozen pages to bring him some more tobacco. They obeyed his orders mechanically, and he began to chew as quietly as if nothing had happened.

Rigaud and the Ouanga remained immovable; and the majority of the negroes themselves trembled with horror at the spectacle to which their chief had treated them. Not so with their chief; no emotion of any kind was visible on the ferocious countenance of the "hero of humanity."

The murderer had not yet paid his ransom; there was another assassination to be performed, and that was my own. I looked at the planter; but in pity for my own feelings, I quickly withdrew my gaze.

He was staring on the mangled body which lay at his feet, stretched in death. His lips were blue; his teeth chattered; every limb trembled convulsively; in his hand he held with a death-gripe the bloody weapon, and with the other he was mechanically wiping away the traces of blood from his brow.

What a singular connection did there exist betwixt this man and myself. Once he sought my life, so that my blood might cry from the ground "Surely he is a white man!" and now he was about to murder me in order to prove that he was a black!

"Well done, friend!" said Biassou; "thou hast at least performed thy duty like a man. For the present," added he, glancing at me, "I shall exact no other proof of thy fidelity, but shall at once consider thee a true brother, and shall invest thee in the high office of executioner to the army."

At this juncture a negro burst from the ranks; some big request was on his lips, and bowing to the ground three times before the generalissimo, he began—

"And is there no reward for me, general, notwithstanding all my services?"

"For thee!" answered the chief—"Well, what is thy request?"

"Why," said the negro, speaking in his own language, "hast thou preferred this white dog before me, by exalting him to an employment of which he is unworthy; while I, who am an indisputable black, and who have performed so many signal feats, am left unheeded and unnoticed, in the rank of a common soldier?"

Biassou was obviously a little puzzled at this unexpected onset; he gave a look to Rigaud, as much as to say, how shall I answer him? The chief of the bands of the Cayes whispered to him in French—

"Parley; dally with him a little; it is impossible to accede to his desires."

"Well," said Biassou, turning to the negro, "I see what thou art driving at; thou wishest promotion in the army. Well, thou shalt have it; nothing could give me greater pleasure. What would'st thou wish to be?"

"An *official*, general," said the negro.

"An *officer*!" said the generalissimo; "well, what claims can you put forward for the epaulette?"

"The distinguished services," replied the negro, "which I have rendered to the cause of my country. Was it not I who, in the memorable month of August, set on fire the establishment of Lagoscette? Was it not I who killed M. Clement, the planter, and exposed the head of his sugar-boiler on the end of a lance? Did I not also cut the throats of ten white women and seven children, giving up the body of one of them for the standard of Boukmann and his gallant blacks? More lately: did I not shut up four families of colonists in a room in Fort Galifet, and burn them to ashes? My father, moreover, was put on the rack at

the Cape, my brother was hung at Rocreu, and I myself have often narrowly escaped with my life. I burned three plantations of coffee, six plantations of indigo, and two hundred boxes of sugar. I killed my master, M. Noé, and his mother, and his ——”

“Spare us a longer relation of thy innumerable deeds of fame,” interrupted Rigaud, whose meek exterior fully concealed his innate ferocity. He was cruel, but with decency; and disliked needless disclosures.

“A thousand other similar acts I could recite, if I chose,” pursued the negro, proudly; “but these are sufficient, I suppose, to prove my claims to the station of an *official*, and entitle me to wear an epaulette like my companions there,” pointing to the aides-de-camp and staff-officers of Biassou.

The generalissimo, after appearing to reflect for a moment, gravely addressed the negro in these words:

“I am delighted with thy services, which, indeed, entitle thee to even a higher rank than that for which thou petitionist; and I take it for granted that thou art acquainted with that most essential of all essentials—Latin.”

“What is thy pleasure, general?” said the man of exploits, with wondering eyes.

“Dost thou understand Latin?” said Biassou.

“La—La—Latin!” repeated the negro, stupefied.

“Yes, Latin—Latin—Latin!” pursued the cunning chief. “I ask thee if thou understandest Latin?” and, at the same time, he unfolded a standard, on which was written the verse of the psalm: ‘*In exitu Israël de Egypto.*’ “Translate that,” said he, “and it will be sufficient proof whether thou art capacitated to hold the rank of officer or not.”

The black, at the very height of astonishment, stood mute and motionless; mechanically twisting and pulling at his drawers, while his white eyes alternately

wandered from the general to the flag, and from the flag to the general.

“Come! wilt thou answer?” said Biassou, impatiently; the negro adopting that mode of solving a difficult question, alleged to be characteristic of the Scotch, scratched his head; then, opening and shutting his mouth alternately, at length muttered that he did not know what the general meant. The countenance of Biassou wore an expression of indignation.

“How!” cried he; “thou wishest to be an officer, yet dost not understand Latin!”

“But, general —”

“Silence!” and the anger of the chief seemed to increase. “I know not what holds me from having thee shot on the instant for thy presumption. Here is a fellow,” continued he, addressing himself to Rigaud, “who pretends to the epaulette, and yet understands not Latin! But come, I shall explain to thee what is written on the flag: ‘*In exitu*’—No soldier; ‘*Israël*’—who is ignorant of Latin—‘*de Aegypto*’—can be an officer. Am I not right, Monsieur le Chapelain?” The little Ouanga bowed an affirmative, and the generalissimo went on.

“This brother, who has just been named executioner of the army, and of whom thou art jealous, understands Latin.”

He turned to the new executioner.

“Is it not true, friend,” said he? “Come, prove to this booby that thou knowest more than he. What is the meaning of ‘*Dominus vobiscum?*’”

The poor planter seemed lost in meditation: his eyes were still fixed on the murdered man; but the voice of Biassou struck terror into his breast, and roused him from his reverie. There was something strange in the air with which this man sought, among the images of horror and remorse that filled his soul,

for some old college recollections, and in the dismal tone of his voice as he repeated the school-boy explanation: "The Lord be with you!"

"*Et cum spiritu tuo!*" solemnly added the Ouanga; and Biassou, determined not to be left out in the classical quotation, devoutly added: "*Amen!*"

Resuming his angry tone and manner, which, however, was only pretended, and mingling bad Latin in every sentence which he uttered, in order to impress the negroes with a high opinion of the learning of their chief, he ordered the ambitious negro to take the lowest place in his rank.

"*Sursum corda!*" said he; "go learn Latin before thou again makest so presumptuous a request; *Orate fratres*, or thou wilt provide work for our new hangman. *Bonus, bona, bonum!*"

The confounded and terrified negro slunk away to his placè in silence, with his head hanging on his breast, amidst the hisses of his comrades, who were indignant at his ill-founded pretensions, and lost in admiration of their learned chief.

I was much struck with the mental dexterity of the chief, so manifest during this scene, burlesque as it was. The manner which he adopted to confound the ambition, always so greedy and so troublesome in a band of rebels, was simple and ingenious; and whilst it confirmed my opinion regarding the stupidity of the negroes, it impressed me with high ideas of the address of their chief.

CHAPTER XVI.

BIASSOU's hour of *almuerzo** was now arrived; and as the breakfast and the breakfast equipage were rather of a singular character, I shall describe them.

They first brought before the *mariscal de campo* of *sû magistad católica* an immense tortoise-shell, in which smoked a kind of *olla podrida*, abundantly mixed with large pieces of bacon.

An enormous Caribbean cabbage† floated on the surface of this *puchero*. On either side of the shell, which served at once for kettle and soup-dish, were two cocoa-cups full of raisins, *sandias*,‡ ignames, and figs, this was meant for the *postre*.§ A loaf of maize and a vessel of wine completed the feast.|| Biassou drew from his pocket some bulbs of garlic, and rubbed the loaf with them himself. He then began to eat, without ordering the removal of the still

* Breakfast.

† The white heart of the *auca caracen* palm, the loftiest and most majestic of the tribe.

‡ Water melons.

§ Dessert.

|| Some of these are real creole dishes; but the others to be rendered palatable to the critics must be taken *cum grano salis*.

palpitating corpse, and invited Rigaud to second him.

The appetite of the chief was terrific.

The Ouanga did not join in the repast; and I presume that, like others of his profession, he never ate in public; but allowed the negroes to believe, if they chose, that he was of a supernatural essence, and could live without mortal food.

During breakfast an aid-de-camp, by Biassou's orders, commenced reviewing the army, which defiled in good order before the cave. The blacks of the Morne Rouge, who were in number about four thousand, marched first; they were divided into small platoons, led on by chiefs, decorated as I have mentioned before, with scarlet girdles. These blacks were tall in stature, muscular, and strong; their weapons consisted of muskets, hatchets, and sabres; bows, arrows, and darts were also common. When they began to move they very much reminded me of the dead march, so universally grave was their deportment, and so uninterrupted their silence. They had no flag, but marched along with an air of trouble and almost dismay.

As these troops were defiling, I heard Biassou whisper to Rigaud in French—

“I wonder when the shot of Blanchelande and Rouvray will relieve me from these cursed bands of the Morne Rouge, who would no more kill a man, except in battle, than if it were a sin. I hate them, for they are almost all Congos, and imitate their imbecile chief, this idol of theirs, Bng-Jargal: a young madman who would fain play the hero of romance. If you knew him, Rigaud—but I hope he will be kept so snug in prison that it will be long ere he has an opportunity of displaying his colours. If the whites, whose prisoner he is, would but deliver me of him as they have done of Boukmann ——”

“Talking of Boukmann,” said Rigaud, “there pass Macaya’s maroon negroes, and Jean François’s messenger along with them; dost thou not consider that he can overturn all the predictions of the sorcerer by informing his companions that he was detained half an hour by the advanced guard, after communicating his tidings to me.”

“*Diabolo!*” said Biassou, “what a fool was I not to think of that! Thanks, dear Rigaud! Whatever way we manage it, we must stop the fellow’s mouth. Macaya!” cried he, with a loud voice.

This chief of the maroon negroes immediately left the ranks at the call of Biassou, and presented his *tromblon* with averted head, in token of respect.

“Turn that black out of the ranks,” said Biassou, “where he has no business, and send him here.”

It was the messenger of Jean François.

Macaya immediately brought the negro before the chief, whose countenance bore that expression of rage which he could so well assume.

“Who art thou?” said he to the awe-struck negro.

“I am a black, general.”

“*Caramba!* that is apparent enough; but what is thy name?”

“My war-name is Vavelan; my patron among the blessed is St. Sabas, deacon and martyr, whose festival falls on the twentieth day before the nativity of our Lord ____”

“What have I to do with the name of thy patron? What I want to know is, how thou couldst have the effrontery to march along with thy well-equipped brethren in the condition in which thou now art? What a contrast thy scabbardless sword, torn drawers, and muddy feet, make beside thy companions’ shining espingoles and snowy belts!”

"It was not my fault, general," replied the black. "I was charged by Jean François, grand-admiral of France, to carry you the tidings of the death of the chief of the English maroons, Boukmann, and like a trusty messenger, I have leaped dikes, crossed bogs, and run myself out of breath in order to do my errand; but I was detained in the camp, and——"

"Enough of that, *gavacho!*" said Biassou. "The question turns upon thy audacity in joining the review in this disorder. Recommend thy soul to St. Sabas, deacon and martyr, thy patron. Go, shoot thyself!"

Here I received a new proof of the power, both military and moral, which Biassou possessed over the rebels. What were the feelings of the unhappy man when this sentence was passed? Did he give them vent in supplications for mercy, or did he defy the authority of the chief by strenuous opposition to his commands? No; not an entreaty nor a murmur escaped his lips; but crossing his arms upon his breast, he submissively bowed three times before his inexorable judge, knelt before the Ouanga, who gravely gave him summary absolution, and left the cave.

A few minutes afterwards a musket-shot was heard, and it announced to Biassou that the negro had obeyed and died.

Biassou had this day tasted the sweets of vengeance, in the death of the carpenter and citizen C——; he had also, in the manner which I have described, preserved the Ouanga's reputation, which, if suspected, might be the means of preventing many from enlisting under the banners of Biassou himself; and now, having drowned in blood any anxiety under which he may have laboured, his countenance was lit up by good-humour, smiles, and sneers; and his expressive eyes, which spoke as plain as eyes could

speak, triumphantly asked Rigaud if he did not admire.*

The review in the mean time went on. This army which had presented an appearance of so much disorder a few hours before, was not less odd-looking when under arms. The innumerable shades of difference in their colour, and their variety of uniform and weapons, gave an air of confusion to the whole mass.

Here a crowd of negroes, whose skins, inured to wind and weather, were as tough as leather-hides, which precluded, as they imagined no doubt, the necessity of covering, were flourishing their clubs, tomahawks, and *casse-têtes*, and keeping time, as well as was practicable, to the melodious sound of a goat's-horn trumpet. There a battalion of mulattoes formed a striking contrast to their darker brethren. Equipped according to the Spanish and English fashion, and even their weapons bearing the mark of civilization on them, they marched in concord to the solemn beat of a war-drum. Then a tumultuous crowd of old men,

* Toussaint l'Ouverture, who was educated in the school of Biassou, and who, if he was not superior in point of address, was at least far from equaling him in perfidy and cruelty, presented still later a spectacle of the same power over the fanatical negroes.

This chief, the issue, it was said, of a royal African race, had received, like Biassou, some rude instruction, to which he added natural talent. He had erected a kind of republican throne in St. Domingo, at the same time that Buonaparte founded in France a monarchy on victory. Toussaint admired ingenuously the first consul; but the first consul, seeing in Toussaint only a troublesome imitator, always repulsed disdainfully the correspondence of the liberated slave, who dared to address him: "To the first of the whites the first of the blacks, greeting."

negresses, and children, presented themselves, groaning under the weight of spits and pitchforks; then invalids bending under the load of old muskets, without either lock or barrel. The line was closed by griotes, with their medley of ornaments, and griots, all joining in frightful grimaces and contortions, and singing incoherent airs to the sound of the guitar, the tomtom, and the balafa.

Every now and then, the line of this strange procession was broken by heterogeneous detachments of *griffes*, *marabouts*, *sacatras*, *memelukes*, *quarteroons*, *sang-melés*, and hordes of black maroons, shouting in chorus the hymns of the Camp de Grand-Pré and Oua-Nasse.

The expression of these maroons was fierce, determined, and cruel. They were pretty substantially armed with shining carbines, well loaded *cabrouets*, and muskets which had lately done service in the hands of the enemy, but which were evidently carried, not for use, but as trophies. Flags waved above their heads of all colours, of all devices—white, red, tri-coloured—surmounted by the cap of liberty, and carrying such inscriptions as these: “Death to the priests and aristocrats!” “Religion for ever!” “Liberty!” “Equality!” “*Vive le roi!* Down with the metropolis!” “*Viva Espana!* No more tyrants!”

This army appeared to me composed of every nation, people and colour, I could even say of disposition, and presented a scene of extraordinary confusion, but which, I believe, did not exceed that which reigned in their minds. The respective bands as they passed the grotto inclined their banners; and Biassou, whose position enabled him to have a full view of all that was going on, courteously returned the salute, and commended or reprimanded each troop as it passed. Every word that he uttered, whether of applause or

otherwise, was received with fanatical respect and a sort of superstitious fear.

This flood of barbarians at length passed by, and no vestige of it remained. I own that the sight of so many wretches, which at first had amused me, ended by weighing down my spirits. In the mean time the daylight was fast fading away; and by the time the last ranks of the procession had defiled, the setting sun dyed with his red gleam the granite mountains of the east.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XVII.

AT the termination of the ostentatious display of the rebel forces, my attention was again attracted towards their leader, Biassou. He was reclining in a pensive attitude, and his countenance, I thought, was by no means deficient either in dignity or intelligence. After preserving a silence of some minutes, he turned to me, and with a manner in which sternness and self-complacency were singularly combined, asked me, whether I was now convinced of the extent of his authority, and of his talent in acquiring and maintaining it?

As I considered my fate already sealed, I was in no mood to flatter the humours of the chief, and accordingly made no reply to his question; but after a momentary pause, I heard him pronounce with solemnity the approach of the hour which he had decreed as the last of my existence. My pride forbade me to betray any symptoms of fear, and I replied, with an air of the greatest indifference I could assume, that I cared not how soon the hour arrived, for I, in truth, wished to be relieved of his presence.

Biassou stared at me for a moment, and then told me, with an aspect from which all expression was studiously banished, that my notion was perfectly just; but suddenly changing his manner, and regarding me with evident curiosity, he informed me that

his clemency would place my life at my own disposal, on certain conditions.

“How!” cried I, astonished; “what do you mean?”

“Yes,” continued Biassou, “thy life depends on thyself; thou canst save it if thou wouldest!” This excess of clemency, the first and the last, without doubt, that Biassou ever exhibited, appeared to me so strange, that I could not utter a word; and at any rate, the Ouanga, who was as much surprised as myself, thrust himself in between us in the dialogue.

“*Que dice?*” cried he, raising his voice as he leaped from the seat, where he had been couched in the fashion of an Indian fakir, and confronted the generalissimo. “*Que dice il excelentissimo senor mariscal de campo?* Does he remember what he promised me? Neither he, nor the *bon Giu* himself can now dispose of thy life; it belongs to me!” At this moment the angry accent half recalled to me the idea for which my mind had been so long groping, but the time was too short: it eluded the grasp of my memory, and I was as much in the dark as ever.

Biassou, by his looks, seemed to intimate that the conjuror had misunderstood him. He rose without discomposure, and whispered some words in his ear, pointing to the black flag which I had already observed. Some words were exchanged between them; after which the Ouanga bowed solemnly in sign of adhesion, and both resumed their places and attitudes.

I felt convinced that, whatever might be Biassou’s motive in holding out the hope of pardon, none was really intended. However, the chief again addressed me, drawing from his pocket the letter of Jean François.

“Young man,” said he, “you must know that our affairs are not prospering. The great Boukmann has fallen in battle. The whites are taking terrible vengeance on the negroes of Cul-de-Sac, two thousand

of whom are already slaughtered. Military stations are erecting on all sides, which will seriously impede the progress of our army in its career of victory. I have discovered, too, the fatal mistake of which our chiefs were guilty in not marching direct to Cape Fran^çois when it could have offered no resistance. It is now strongly fortified. The main road at the east end of the town is intersected by a river, on which a battery of cannon is raised on boats, protected by two small camps on either side. On the south, the great road which crosses the Haut du Cap, is covered with troops and artillery; and on the land side, a strong palisade and *chevaux-de-frise*, erected by the labour of the inhabitants, surrounds the town.* It is, therefore, now too late to attempt to force the Cape. Farther, our ambuscade at Dompte-Mulatre has miscarried; and worse than all, the fever of Siam has broken out in the camp of Jean Fran^çois, where it is making fearful ravages. That general is, therefore, of opinion, and my sentiments accord with his, that before we are reduced to extremities, overtures of peace should be made to his excellency the governor, and to the colonial assembly. Here is the draft of a letter to that body, which I will read to you:—

“GENTLEMEN DEPUTIES,

“Severe misfortunes, in which we are deeply involved, have interrupted the prosperity of this once

* Our author is here a little out in his geography. The Haut du Cap, of which Morne Rouge is a part, is a detached mountain rising out of the great northern plain. It descends in precipitous cliffs to the sea, forming a sort of peninsula, the bay of Acul lying on one side, and the harbour of the Cape on the other. A river flows close under it on the south, and on this river is Galifet.

flourishing colony. How they were brought on, it is unnecessary to detail; but one day you will render all the justice our position merits. We claim to be included in the general amnesty which King Louis XVI. has issued. If this is refused, as the King of Spain is a good king, who treats us well and *rewards our duty*, we shall continue to serve him with zeal and devotion.

“We observe, by the decree of the 28th September, 1791, that you are invested with full powers to decide on the condition of persons not free, and on the political rights which should be granted to men of colour. We profess our willingness to defend with our lives the decree of the national assembly, dignified with the usual formalities, and yours, which may be consequent on it. It would even be interesting, if you passed a resolution, sanctioned by his excellency the governor, to the effect that the deplorable condition of the slaves shall engage your early and serious attention, in order that measures may be devised for its amelioration. We have no doubt that by doing so the disturbances, which at present agitate the colony, will cease.

“We trust that you do not imagine that we will ever take up arms at the command of revolutionary assemblies. We are the subjects of three kings—the King of Congo, who is our natural and legitimate king; the King of France, who represents our fathers; and the King of Spain, who represents our mothers. These three kings are the descendants of those men

who were led by a star to the foot of the Man-god. It must be obvious to you, that if we consent to obey the different assemblies, we may be called on to fight against our brothers, the subjects of those kings to whom we have sworn allegiance. And then, as to the 'will of the nation,' about which so much is said, we do not know what it means; because, ever since the world has existed, we have only obeyed the will of a king.

"The King of France regards us with tenderness, and the King of Spain is ever ready to assist us. We are, in short, mutual helps to one another. We have a common cause: the cause of humanity. For the rest, should their majesties cast us off, we should easily find another king. We have thus explained our sentiments to you, and the basis on which we will consent to make peace.

(Signed)

JEAN FRANCOIS, General.

BIASSOU, Field-Marshal.

DESPREZ,
MAUZEAU,
TOUSSAINT,
AUBERT, } Commissioners,
} ad hoc."*

* The authenticity of this singular and very characteristic letter is disputed. Our author believes the colonists, who say that it was actually sent; but it appears to have been founded on a ridiculous piece of jesuistry which Jean Francois is said to have been taught about three kings.

I was not a little interested by this specimen of negro diplomacy, although I did not clearly understand some parts of it. Biassou, on finishing the reading, seemed vastly well pleased with his performance; and remarked, with as much suavity as his stern manner would permit him to assume, "that I must be sensible of their sincere desire for peace."

"But," added he, "now comes thy part in the business, on performance of which I have promised thee thy life. Neither Jean François nor I have been brought up in the schools of the whites, where they learn fine language: we know how to fight, but are ignorant of the art of writing. Notwithstanding, I should not be satisfied if my letter excited the proud *burlerias* of our old masters. Thou appearest to have learnt this frivolous science which we know nothing about. Correct, therefore, the faults in our dispatch which might make the whites laugh. This is the price which I demand for your life."

As Biassou concluded, he held out his hand to me with the letter, declaring, on the honour of a general, that if I drew it out in proper style my life should be my reward. My life, however, I scorned to accept on such conditions. I could not brook the idea of sitting down at the command of a slave, to correct his grammar or orthography, though such an occupation should even save my life. This, however, I very much doubted; or, in other words, I did not doubt, that when I had performed my task, the black villain would forget his promise. Besides, what was life to me?

I declined his offer.

Biassou seemed amazed at my folly, and at a loss how to conduct himself. He first swore a great oath, and then, in a calmer tone, warned me of the consequences of my refusal.

"How!" cried he, "thou lovest better to die than

to put some strokes of the pen on a bit of parchment?"

"Yes," answered I. My resolution appeared to embarrass him, but after thinking for a moment—

"Fool!" said he, "remember, it is not death only you have to meet with! At least, bear in mind that death in the camp of Biassou has no resemblance to death in other places. I am less obstinate, however, than thou; and, as a proof of my clemency, I will allow thee some time for reflection. Thou wilt now withdraw from my presence; and to-morrow evening, at sunset, I will again require thy attendance, when thou must either be prepared to accede to my proposal or to submit to the fate which otherwise will await thee. Caudi," continued Biassou, "give the prisoner in charge to the blacks of Morne Rouge. Let him be brought to my presence to-morrow at sunset." My hands were instantly tied behind my back, and I was led from the presence of the chief.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN any extraordinary event, any dreadful catastrophe breaks thunder-like in the midst of a happy and uniform life, the sleep of the soul is broken; but this fearful awakening seems to the sufferer himself to be only a dream. With one who has been always happy, despair begins with stupor. Unexpected adversity resembles the torpedo: it shocks, but stupefies; and the light that flashes in our eyes at the touch is not the light of day. Men, things, actions, pass before us like a phantasmagoria, and everything floats around us unsteady and unsubstantial as the details of a dream. All is changed in the horizon of our life, both atmosphere and perspective; but it requires a long time to pass, before our eyes lose this sort of luminous image of departed happiness which follows them wherever they wander, and continually interposing between them and the dark sad present; changes its aspect and hue, and gives I know not what of falsehood to reality.

Then everything that appears to us is absurd and impossible. We scarcely believe in our own existence; because since all has disappeared which once formed our being, we cannot comprehend how it could have done so without carrying us along with it, and how the sole remains of our life are ourselves. If this violent position of the soul is prolonged, it deranges

the equilibrium of the mind, and becomes madness: a state which, in such circumstances, is perhaps a happiness, in which life for the unfortunate is only a vision, of which he himself is the phantom.

In my own case I gave way willingly to the delusion that my misfortunes had no existence in reality. I thought it impossible that I, who for so long a period had enjoyed an elysium of happiness, could be precipitated to the very depths of misery; and oftener than once, as I passed through the lighted camp, the idea seized me that I was actually in the midst of a dream.

I know not, however, why I trouble you with these wild thoughts, which can neither be understood nor described. They must be felt, and I *did* feel them.

In this state of mind I arrived at the station of the negroes of the Morne Rouge; I was delivered over to their keeping, which they determined should be effectual. A strong cord was produced, and I was tied by the waist to the trunk of a tree, in the neighbourhood of which a large fire was blazing, surrounded by a crowd of negroes. It seemed to me as if I was in the midst of spectres, and had been delivered to them by spectres. Some boiled potatoes were placed before me, which I ate, from the mechanical instinct which the goodness of God leaves to men, even in the midst of the most absorbing pre-occupation of mind.

My keepers kept strict watch over me for some time; but at last they all retired to their tents, with the exception of six, who stretched themselves on the ground around the fire. In a short time they also sunk into profound repose.

I had now leisure and quiet to reflect on my situation, and to contrast it with my condition a few weeks before. Then, the past and the present presented nothing but interrupted joy, and the future swelled with streams of new and untried felicity. Then, an

angel-form gladdened my eyes, and angel-virtues called forth my admiration and my love.

I compared those days of happiness with the day which had just gone by, in which so many strange things had passed before me, that I doubted their existence, and in which my life was condemned three times, and was not yet saved. I meditated on the future now before me, which consisted only of one to-morrow, and presented nothing certain but misery and death: death fortunately near. It seemed to me as if I was in the struggles of the night-mare. I asked myself if it was possible that all which had passed had really passed; that the wild scene around me was the camp of the tiger Biassou; that Maria was for ever lost; and that it was I who was here a prisoner, guarded by six barbarians, bound to a tree, devoted to certain death, and ruminating thus by the light of a brigand's fire?

But, in spite of all my efforts to resist the intrusion of the most agonizing of all my reflections, my heart perpetually returned to Maria. I brooded over her fate; I struggled with my bonds, as if to fly to her relief: yet, hoping always that the horrible dream would soon dissipate, and that God could not have really devoted to a destiny I dared not dwell upon, the angel he had given me for a wife. The wretched chain of my ideas led me then to Pierrot, and rage almost deprived me of my senses. I felt the veins of my brow swell till they were ready to burst. How I despised, cursed, and abhorred myself, for having, even for a moment, united my friendship for this wretch with my love for Maria! It was in my power to have slain him on the day of the fight of the Grande Riviere. What held my arm? Fool, fool! He was dead, and I was about to die, and I wept for the life of both; for his, because he did not fall by my hand, and for mine, because I had not slain him.

All these emotions agitated me by turns, in the midst of a half-sleep in which exhaustion had plunged me. I have no idea how much time elapsed during my stupor, but I was suddenly awakened by a man's voice, singing at a distance, '*Yo que soy contrabandista.*' I opened my eyes with a start: all was dark. The negroes were asleep, and the fire almost dead. Not a sound disturbed the silence of the night; and I began to think that my fevered imagination had conjured up the words which the villain Pierrot had repeated to me in his dungeon. My heavy eye-lids again closed, and I sank into repose. I opened them a second time. The voice had recommenced; and sang with a melancholy expression, and nearer me than before, the couplet of a Spanish romance—

Eu los campos de Oacana,
 Prisionero cai;
 Me llevan à Cotadilla
 Desdichado fui.*

It was no dream! It was the voice of Pierrot! A moment after it rose again in the darkness and silence of the night; and for the second time I heard the words sung almost in my ear: '*Yo que soy contrabandista.*' At the same moment a dog rushed to my feet, and covered me with caresses. It was Hero. I raised my eyes: a black stood before me; and the expiring light of the fire threw his colossal shadow before the dog. It was Pierrot!

Revenge! revenge! but I was mute and immovable from surprise. I was not asleep. Could the dead return? This was no dream, but an apparition. I turned away with horror; and at the sight Pierrot's head sank sadly upon his breast.

* A captive in Oacana's fields, I fell beneath their sway,
 And now to Cotadilla I am weeping borne away.

“Brother!” murmured he, “hast thou forgotten thy promise? Rememberest thou not that we two drank of the cup of peace, and that thou didst pledge thyself to banish every suspicion of my fidelity, when the air which thou hast heard should fall upon thine ear?”

“Devil!” cried I, “wilt thou mock me to my dying hour? Wilt thou attend to-morrow at the scaffold and tell me of thy fidelity? Murderer of my uncle, ravisher of Maria; and yet, brother? Accursed be thy race and thee!” and I sought for my sword, forgetting that I could not use it. Pierrot observed the motion, and it seemed to affect him deeply. In a soothing tone he continued—

“I do not mock thee; I pity thee, for I know thy misery; but I have miseries of my own, which, if thou knewst, thy rage would cease.”

My keepers, awakened by the sound of voices, now rushed towards us in alarm, and perceiving a stranger, were about to seize on him. When Pierrot turned, however, a shout of joy rent the air, and the next moment the six negroes were prostrate on the earth, and beating it with their foreheads.

I was too highly excited to consider the meaning of this: I repulsed Hero with violence, as his caresses only added to my torment: I tugged at my bonds and at my sword, and finally burst into tears of rage.

“Wretch that I am!” cried I, “will these cursed cords for ever bind me? Is my deadliest foe beside me, and can I not wreak my vengeance on his guilty head? Oh Maria! Maria! thy ravisher is safe: yes, safe, *and in my presence!* My rage is impotent: my hands are powerless!” The violence of my feelings exhausted me, and I became silent. Pierrot now addressed the negroes, who were still in the attitude of obeisance, and commanded them to unbind

me. Several knives were instantly applied to my cords, and I stood erect and free; but surprise chained me to the spot.

Pierrot then advanced, and presented me with a dagger.

“There,” said he, “execute thy purpose. God forbid that I should dispute thy right to dispose of my life. Thou hast saved it three times: it is thine now; strike, if thou wilt!”

His tone was sad yet dignified, and quite free from any feeling of reproach or bitterness. Before, I would have given the world to have been enabled to poinard him, but now I shrunk from the deed. There was something infinitely abhorrent to my feelings in the character of an assassin which must attach to me did I avail myself of his offer. Pierrot’s frank and open demeanour also surprised me, and I was not altogether without an idea that he might not be so guilty as I supposed. Must I confess it! There was something in the air of this extraordinary being which subdued me. I rejected the dagger.

“Wretch!” said I, “I would kill thee; but like a soldier, not like an assassin. Defend thyself!”

“Defend myself!” cried he, astonished; “and against whom?”

“Against me!” He appeared stupified.

“Against thee! It is the only thing in which I cannot obey thee. Look at Hero. I might cut his throat, if I chose: he would allow me; but I could not force him into strife with me. He would not understand me if I wished him to do it. I do not understand thee. I am to thee as Hero is to me.”

I remained silent and motionless. Pierrot again proceeded—

“Why wilt thou not strike? I see indignation sparkling in thine eyes; I feel myself to be the object of thy undisguised hatred: yet, why should it be

so? Thy uncle is, indeed, massacred, and many of thy friends have shared the same fate: it is true thy plantations have served for fuel to illuminate the darkness of the night, and to light the black army on their career of plunder and devastation; it is true that no memorial remains of the grandeur of thy uncle's mansion, and that few survive to tell of the gay and glorious festival which was celebrated within its walls on the very night of its fall. All these things are true; yet frown not on me as if I were the perpetrator of such cruel deeds. Charge my countrymen. Alas! I vindicate them not; but accuse not me; identify me not with them. This argument thou didst thyself employ, when I complained to thee of the oppression of the whites; thou saidst it was thy countrymen, not thyself." Pierrot paused, and regarded me with intense anxiety.

"Tell the whole of thy story!" cried I. "What part didst *thou* bear in this fiendish work? In the catalogue of my misfortunes why hast thou omitted the name of Maria: of her on whom thou knowest full well my happiness, my life, depends? I know thy reason; but tell me, thou demon, *where* is Maria; *where* did thy accursed arms transport her?"

My almost uncontrollable fury was here redoubled by observing evident embarrassment on Pierrot's countenance. "Wretch!" cried I, "I see thy guilt; it is not necessary for thee to confess it. Tell me only what kind of fate has been Maria's?"

"Thou mayst, perhaps, see confusion in my countenance," replied Pierrot, with an open and manly air, "but guilt thou seest not. I do not wonder at thy suspicions; but at present, I can only entreat thee to lay them aside, without affording thee further satisfaction. Believe, in the mean time, I supplicate thee, that I am a true man, and especially true to thee."

“Where is Maria?” I repeated.

A cloud fell upon his brow, and he appeared for a moment to be embarrassed: at last, breaking silence—

“*Maria!*” replied he; “yes, thou art right; but too many ears are near us.”

His embarrassment, and these words “*thou art right*,” kindled a thrill in my heart. It seemed as if he had eluded my question. At this moment he looked at me with an expression of sincerity mingled with profound emotion.

“Suspect me not,” said he, “I conjure thee. I will tell thee everything anon. Love me as I love thee, with confidence.” He stopped to observe the effect of these words; and then added in a tone of tenderness—

“May I call thee brother?”

But my jealous anger had returned, and his friendship appeared to me hypocrisy.

“Brother!” cried I, indignantly; “how dare you, ungrateful wretch, recall to me the time that is associated with that word.” Large tears fell from his eyes.

“It is not I who am ungrateful!” said he.

“Speak, then, and at once! Again I demand, where is Maria? Speak!”

“Not now! nor here! Other ears than ours are listening. Besides, thou wouldest not believe me on my word alone, and the time presses. Behold, the day breaks, and I must set thee at liberty. All is over since thou doubtdest me, and it would be as well to dispatch me with thy dagger; yet, wait a little while before thou completest what thou callest thy revenge. I must first deliver thee. Come, come with me to Biassou!”

This agitated and incoherent speech was incomprehensible. In spite of all my prejudice against him,

he never spoke but the sound of his voice made some chord in my heart vibrate. While listening—I know not of what nature was the power he exerted over me. I surprised myself hesitating between pity and revenge, defiance and a blind confidence. I seemed bound, as it were, by some strange spell, and without offering any resistance, suffered him to lead me from the scene of our meeting.

CHAPTER XIX.

As we passed through the station which was occupied by the negroes of the Morne Rouge, where the night before each individual appeared to thirst for my blood, I was surprised at the mingled emotions of surprise, joy, and fear, which were visible on every countenance. Many blacks prostrated themselves on the ground; others at a distance uttered joyful exclamations; while the greater proportion, preserving a respectful distance, testified in various ways their joy and reverence. When I connected this scene with the singular influence which Pierrot had formerly possessed over his fellow-slaves in my uncle's plantation, my surprise was indeed lessened, but my curiosity regarding his rank was not thereby gratified.

When we approached the guard which surrounded the grotto of Biassou, their captain, Caudi, demanded our business in an angry tone, and ordered us to stand back on peril of our lives. Pierrot, however, continued to push forward without minding his remonstrance; and when we arrived nearer the station of the guard, so that his face was distinctly seen, Caudi pulled off his montera cap, embroidered with gold, and as if terrified at his audacity, bent himself to the earth. In fear and trembling he then conducted us into the presence of Biassou, stammering

forth a thousand excuses, to which Pierrot only replied by a gesture of disdain.

Great as had been my surprise at the demonstrations of respect towards Pierrot by the common soldiery, it was doubled on seeing Caudi, one of the principal officers of the army, humble himself before my uncle's slave; and I began to ask myself who this man could be, whose authority was so great. But what shall I say when, on being ushered into the general's apartment, I saw the savage and haughty Biassou, who was alone at the time, and eating quietly his calalou, rise in haste at the first sight of Pierrot; and dissembling his surprise and mortification, make him a profound obeisance, at the same time offering him his own throne of mahogany.

Pierrot returned the salutation of Biassou with dignity, and seemingly conscious that he received only his due. He declined, however, the offer of the seat.

"Jean Biassou," said he, "I am come not to take your seat, but simply to ask a favour of you."

"*Alteza*," replied Biassou with renewed obeisance, "you need not condescend to ask any favour of your servant, for you know that all he is and has is yours."

This title of *alteza*, which is equivalent to highness, increased my astonishment. Notwithstanding the external appearance of respect which Biassou assumed, I saw plainly that he rendered no willing homage, and that it was extorted from him only by a sense of the superior rank and power of Pierrot. I was lost in conjecture.

"Biassou," said Pierrot, "I do not demand so much; all I wish you to grant is the life and the liberty of this prisoner." The general was confused for a moment; but recollecting himself, replied—

"How deeply I regret that your *alteza* has made a demand with which it is not in my power to com-

ply. This prisoner is neither Jean Biassou, nor the property of Jean Biassou, nor is he at the disposal of Jean Biassou."

"Not yours!" exclaimed Pierrot, sternly; "whose then? I thought you had the chief command?"

"No, indeed! your *alteza* mistakes."

"Name your superior, then?"

"My army!"

The cunning and insinuating air with which Biassou eluded the frank and haughty questions of Pierrot, announced his determination to grant nothing more to him than the outward respect, to which it appeared he was entitled.

"Your army, general!" cried my companion; "do you not command it?"

"Will your *alteza* be pleased to consider," replied Biassou, determined to maintain his purpose, though still preserving the attitude of an inferior, "how difficult it is to command such a multitude, whom we see here collected for the very purpose of delivering themselves from obedience."

Had I been so inclined I could easily have exposed this ingenious evasion of Biassou, having had so lately a proof of his unlimited sway over the minds of his soldiers. But although the person most deeply interested in the affair, I believe I did not feel so keenly as my intercessor.

"If your authority, then, Biassou, is so ill-founded," replied Pierrot, "and if your soldiers are your chief, pray what motives have they for determining on the death of the prisoner?"

"Your *alteza* is aware," answered Biassou, covering with something resembling gravity his usual ferocious sneer, "that Boukmann was killed by the troops of the government. Mine, therefore, are desirous of avenging themselves for the death of the chief of the maroon negroes of Jamaiea, by weighing the head of

this young officer against his. Head for head and trophy for trophy, say they, and may the *bon Giu* hold the balance!"

"Is it possible," cried Pierrot, with a look of horror, "that you persevere in these barbarous reprisals? Such unnecessary cruelties are a foul blot on the justice of our cause; and more than any other obstacle, will retard, or even defeat its triumph. Having been myself a prisoner in the camp of the whites, from which I have just escaped, I was ignorant of the death of Boukmann, of which you have told me. He was a monster of cruelty, and deserved no better fate; but I have a piece of intelligence of the same kind to give you in return. Do you recollect the treacherous Jeannot, who, under pretence of guiding the white army, drew it into the ambuscade at Domppte-Mulatre? He also has received the punishment of his crimes. You know, Biassou, and—interrupt me not—that he rivalled in atrocity even Boukmann and yourself. But in what manner, think you, did he fall: by the hand of the whites, or by the thunder of heaven? No, it was Jean François himself who performed this act of justice!"

Biassou listened in a respectful attitude, but with a sullen and downcast look; and was evidently relieved by the entrance of Rigaud, who, after saluting Pierrot with profound respect, whispered some words into the ear of the general. At the same moment an unusual agitation was heard throughout the camp. Pierrot, without taking notice of it, again proceeded.

"Yes, Jean François, who has no other defect than a fatal love of pomp, and his ridiculous exhibition of his coach and six, which drags him every day from his camp to the mass of the curé of Grand Riviere; Jean François has put an end to the villainy of Jeannot. Cowardice and cruelty, Biassou, are too frequently combined, of which this Jeannot furnishes a

striking example. He besought Jean François, in the most abject terms, to spare his life, and professed himself ready to undergo any humiliation, provided his vile carcase might be suffered to breathe. But notwithstanding all his tears and remonstrances, the scene of his horrid cruelties was also the scene of his punishment. He was shot under a large tree, to the branches of which were affixed iron hooks, on which the wretch used to suspend his living victims. I will quit this subject, Biassou, trusting that you will meditate seriously on the character and fate of Jeannot. Reflect, Biassou, on this example! Why those massacres which urge the whites to new ferocity? Why the tricks and juggles which excite, to a still higher pitch, the fury of our unhappy comrades? There is in your army an individual who gives himself out for a magician, or something of that sort, and who, under your auspices, takes advantage of the ignorance and superstition of our countrymen, in order to lead them into unwarrantable excesses, or in short, to practise any cruelty which may be agreeable to you. If your talents for command, Biassou, are such as oblige you to have recourse to such an impostor in order to support your authority, I must say that the sooner you resign your command the better; but if your lawful authority over your troops is maintained by your own reputation and talent, how unworthy is it of you to employ the aid of a deceiver, for purposes at direct variance with the mission wherewith you are charged! I know of a rascal at Trou-Coffi, who, pretending to be favoured with revelations from the Virgin, deals them out to his deluded followers in great abundance; and their general purport is to excite the blacks to new deeds of wanton barbarity, and to lead them on to murder, in the name of Maria ——”

There was something more tender than religious veneration in the manner in which Pierrot pronounced

this name; and I could not help feeling offended and irritated.

"I blush for such practices," continued he; "I glory in the justice, in the holiness of our cause, for it is the cause of humanity, of freedom, and of religion; but never can I sanction the conduct of those who, pretending to be its friends, are, in fact, its most formidable foes. Our cause is, in itself, just and holy; but tell me, Biassou: will you dare to apply these words to your own conduct, or to that of many who follow your example? Is it just, is it holy, to butcher such unoffending victims as women and children; to die in blood the white locks, and to torture the limbs of age; to destroy the houses and the estates of the planters, and to massacre themselves? Are these things just and holy? Answer me, Biassou? I believe that the cause of negro freedom will finally and eternally triumph; but then, will neither its purity be sullied, nor its holiness be defiled, by deeds of wickedness such as these?"

He ceased. The fire that beamed from his eyes, the commanding aspect of his countenance, and the animated tone of his voice, struck the beholder with awe and admiration. Biassou never once dared to encounter his glance, but like a convicted criminal, crouched before him. Like a fox caught by a lion, his eyes obliquely cast down, seemed to search for some hole of fraud or cunning by which to escape from a power with which he could not cope.

While he thus meditated, the chief of the band of Cayes, this same Rigaud, who, on the evening before, had looked tranquilly on at so many horrors committed before him, appeared indignant at the crimes of which Pierrot had traced the picture, and exclaimed with hypocritical consternation—

"My God! how dreadful is the spectacle of an enraged people!"

In the mean time the tumult without was increasing every moment, and appeared at length to give some uneasiness to Biassou. Rigaud affected great astonishment and indignation at the uproar; but I believe Pierrot and myself appreciated his sincerity much in the same manner. I afterwards learned that the commotion was caused by the blacks of the Morne Rouge, who could not contain themselves for joy at the unexpected return of their chief, and determined to enforce by physical strength, if necessary, his representations to Biassou, although they were not aware of their nature. Rigaud had communicated this intelligence privately to Biassou, which determined the wily chief as to the course of conduct he should adopt in regard to the request of Pierrot.

“*Alteza*,” said he, with an air of assumed dignity, “if we are severe upon the whites you are severe upon us. You are wrong, however, to upbraid me with the violence of the torrent: I am myself dragged along by it. However, I consent to waive the subject. *Que podria hacer a hora?** What were the commands you signified to me?”

“Grant me,” said Pierrot, “what I have already asked: the life and liberty of this prisoner.”

Biassou thought for a moment, as if endeavouring to prove to Pierrot how hard a request he had preferred; and then, with pretended cordiality, replied, that to show his desire to cultivate the good will of his *alteza*, he would grant a request, which he would undoubtedly have refused to any other.

“Allow me only,” continued he, “to speak one word in private to the prisoner, after which I will allow him to follow your *alteza*.”

During the interview between Pierrot and Biassou I had remained a very inattentive witness. The va-

* What can I do now?

riety of conflicting emotions which had distracted me during the preceding eventful day, and of which not the least violent had occurred only about an hour before, had produced a considerable degree of mental debility, a natural consequence of which was, that I could not prevail upon myself to regard Pierrot in any other light than that in which I had been accustomed to view him for some weeks previous. I still looked on him as the destroyer of my happiness, and remembered, with renewed suspicion, his embarrassment when questioned about Maria, and his refusal to give any explanation.

Meanwhile, Biassou approached me, and drew me into a dark corner of the grotto. He then told me that he could only grant my life on the condition which he had previously named, and which, he hoped, I would not now refuse: at the same time, he drew from his pocket the document to which I have already referred.

“Thou wilt consent?” said he.

“No.”

“Ah!” with his usual *ricanement*, “still in the same mind? You think you have a protector now, and can afford to be obstinate. Do you know who this person is?”

“Yes,” replied I; “he is a monster like yourself, only still more a hypocrite.”

Biassou stared at me in astonishment when I had uttered these words.

“How!” said he; “then do you pretend not to know him?”

“Yes,” replied I, “I do know him to be a slave of my uncle, called Pierrot.”

Biassou chuckled like a hyena.

“Ha! ha!” said he, “that is odd enough. This man is endeavouring to save your life, and you call him ‘a monster like me!’ ”

“It is not worth while to give you any explanation of the seeming inconsistency,” replied I; “but for your satisfaction, I shall state my sentiments in still stronger terms. I hate my seeming protector; and while he intercedes for my life I long for his death, and my first hour of liberty will be the last of his existence!”

“Strange!” exclaimed Biassou; “yet you appear to speak as you think, and I hardly suppose you would jest about your life. Your protector is a man whom you hate; he pleads for your life, and you mutter vows for his death. No matter: it is all one to me. Since you refuse my request, a short respite is all that I can give you; and if, therefore, you promise on your word of honour—and that, I am told, with a Frenchman is sacred—to place yourself at my disposal two hours before sunset, you are free, in the mean time, to follow this man.”

I at once gave my word of honour to do as Biassou had desired; for I had secretly determined not to owe my life to Pierrot; and, indeed, I had no desire for life, farther than as it afforded me an opportunity of inquiring into the fate of Maria, and avenging it. The word which Biassou demanded, confiding in French honour, was a cheap and easy mode of obtaining a day for these purposes.

Thus our singular conference terminated; and Biassou returned to Pierrot, and with a low obeisance, informed him that the white prisoner was now subject to the orders of his *alteza*.

“You can lead him away when you please,” said he; “he is at your command.” Pierrot’s eyes sparkled with joy; he took the chief cordially by the hand, and expressed his sense of the favour.

“Thanks, Biassou!” said he; “a thousand thanks! This is a service which entitles your call upon me for any, and all I can render in return. Continue to dis-

pose as you [please of my comrades of the Morne Rouge, till I return."

He then addressed himself to me; and with delight beaming in his countenance, exclaimed—

"Thou art free: let us depart!" at the same time laying hold on me, and almost dragging me after him towards the door of the cavern. I submitted in sullen silence. Biassou looked on me in astonishment, which was visible even through the demonstrations of respect with which he accompanied the departure of my companion.

CHAPTER XX.

ON finding myself alone with Pierrot, I began to reflect on the line of conduct I should adopt towards him. I was not long in determining to call him to a severe reckoning for his unparalleled ingratitude and baseness; and although my conviction of his guilt had been considerably weakened by the scene which had just closed, his crime again recurred to me in all its enormity, when I called to mind the moment in which I had seen him carrying off my Maria, at the conflagration of Fort Galifet, and hurrying, with all his might, to prevent my overtaking him. This was to my mind an undoubted proof of his guilt; and however strange or irreconcilable his exertions in my behalf might appear, or however wonderful the mystery which enveloped him, I heeded not, and only thought of his guilt and my revenge. In any other circumstances the true rank and character of this negro would have been to me an object of lively curiosity. I had known him at first as a mere slave of my uncle; next, as my supposed rival in love. I at one time thought him dead, and that I had assisted at his death; and at another, he stood before me alive, and became the means of my rescue. He was a degraded slave; and yet the most renowned negro commanders quailed before him and paid him reverence. Such was the mysterious Pierrot; but all was forgotten in

his atrocious crime. Even the strange things that had just passed were scarcely sufficient to make me suspend my judgment; and I waited with impatience the moment in which I could force him to an explanation. That moment at length came.

We walked quickly from the general's head-quarters, and passed through the triple rows of negroes, who, during our progress, lay prostrate on the ground; some of them exclaiming: '*Miraculo! Ya no esta prisoniero!*'* I was, however, at a loss to know to which of us these words were intended to apply, as they were equally true of both. We at length reached the extremity of the camp; and lost sight of the ridges of rock by which, on one side, it was surrounded. Pierrot continued to advance with rapid strides; but, as we were now far from all human habitations, I forcibly laid hold on him, and desired him to stand.

"Now," said I, "it is needless to go further; the ears which you feared cannot hear us. Speak! where is Maria?"

Pierrot looked at me with mildness.

"Maria!" said he; "still Maria!"

"Yes, Maria! It is the question I shall ask till my last breath, and till your last breath is drawn. Where is Maria?"

"Nothing, then, can dissipate thy doubts of my faith? Thou wilt soon know all."

"Soon, monster!" cried I; "tell me *now*, for *soon* shalt thou be beyond my call. Where is Maria? Where is Maria? Dost thou hear? Answer, or exchange thy life for mine! Draw, and defend thyself!"

"I have already told thee," said he, "that that cannot be. The torrent cannot struggle against its source; and my life, which thou hast saved three

* A miracle! He is not a prisoner.

times, cannot combat against thine. Besides, the thing is impossible: we have only one dagger between two!" and in speaking thus, he drew his poignard from his girdle, and presented it to me.

"Strike!" said he.

In ungovernable fury I seized it, and held it to his breast. He stood quite unmoved, which only increased my rage.

"Wretch!" cried I, "thy obstinacy has well nigh made me a murderer; and assuredly I shall become so, if thou dost not tell me of my Maria's fate."

Pierrot replied with calmness—

"I own thy right to dispose of my life; but with clasped hands, and on my bended knees, I entreat thee to spare it but one hour longer! Strange that he to whom I am indebted thrice for life should suspect me of ingratitude! but, if all thy suspicions have not fled before the lapse of one hour, I will then no more entreat thee for life; and even if thou shouldst wish to spare it, I shall be my own destroyer. Think not that I fear to die. I plead for life, not on my own account, but on thine. I ask it in the name of Maria; of thy young and lovely wife."

"Is she young and lovely still?" cried I. Pierrot answered not; and his countenance did not betray the silence of his tongue. But there was something in the intensity of his language and his look which I could not withstand.

"Surely," thought I, "if he is not the most consummate villain that ever breathed, conscious virtue sits enthroned on his countenance." I granted him his request, and handed him the dagger, which I still held in my hand. He refused, however, to receive it.

"It is time enough," said he, "when thy suspicions are removed. In the mean time, let us resume our journey; and I entreat thee again to

question me not till the time for explanation has arrived."

We resumed our journey; evidently as much to the satisfaction of Hero as well as of his master. During our dispute on the road, the animal had often stopped, and returned to us; seemingly to inquire the cause of our delay, and to express his anxiety that we should proceed. Now he galloped joyously before us, appearing perfectly aware of the road which his master intended to take.

We soon plunged into a forest; and in the space of about half-an-hour had arrived at the borders of a beautiful savanna, through which meandered a limpid stream.* Trees of immense size, and which had, ap-

* The notes of our friend supply a more minute description of a St. Domingo savanna:—

When we had escaped from the leafless forests of St. Raphaël, we entered a broad and beautiful savanna, dotted with mahogany trees, and speckled with cattle. It stretched betwixen the fork of the mountains: the chain of the Cebao on the one hand, and that of the Cahos on the other; between which the Bouyaha rolls its flood from the French to the Spanish portion of the island. Though this great prairie was yellow as a stubble field at harvest home, it was a sublime prospect. Not an inhabitant. We travelled on all the way to Atalaya, through the same interminable meadows: one while varied by copses and little woods of mahogany-trees, intermixed with palms; at another all palms, sometimes grouped in small clusters; at another, detached: a wide wilderness chequered with trees. Then again succeeded the park-like woods, and the searc'd meadows, varying the foliage from the latanier to a lofty palm, the stems of which stood up above the surrounding copses, like feathered stars. There seemed to be no embellishment of wondrous flowers in this wild. A simple blue blossom with a crisped edge (the ruellia hispida), that seemed, in the withered grass, like autumn violets; a dwarf crimson convolvulus, and a yellow bud or two

parently, stood the blasts of a hundred years, cast their venerable shades along the side at which we en-

just stared up to the sunshine here and there to tell what nature could do to decorate this miracle of a desert, which, wondrous in its vastness, did not need the aid of flowers to engross the admiration. I say a desert, though so fertile, for in places the multitudinous cattle could not be seen, to recall the domestic sensations. Two or three crows screaming in their flight, and a large kind of parrot, brilliantly green and blue, squalling its hoarse alarm, or singing a sort of song that sounded like 'Tuenlihoo, Tuenlihoo,' as we cantered along, were all of animal life seen. Sometimes the plain varied into wood-covered swells, all of beautiful broad-topped trees, or naked rocks, bristling with fan palms, so white that, with the radiant sky above us, they seemed to realise the incongruities in Coleridge's 'Vision of the Palace;' "the sunny domes on caves of ice," in the "wilds immeasurable to man;" for there was no seeing over the immense stretch of plain where earth or heaven commenced. The mountains looked far and blue; but one, detached from the rest, as if it rose right from amidst the boundless waste, was peculiarly sublime. Its north face was a cliff, nearly perpendicular. Its southern, a descent hastily, but regularly subsiding to the plain and terminating in successive inequalities of less altitude. This is the Penon of the Spanish maps. It uprears itself from the savanna. I should conclude it to be about twice the height of Gibraltar, that is three thousand feet, which it greatly resembles. The earth of the plain was, generally, a deep black vegetable mould. The calcareous rock shone through its surface in places. Sometimes it was a yellow pulverulent soil. Towards San Miguel, where we approach the frontier mountains of the ancient department of the west, the scene has a little diversity of surface before changing from the condition of a plain to cloud-piercing eminences. The village of cottages, by the side of the gentle hills of chequered wood and meadow, has a very European character. I could have fancied myself in England, it so much so resembled the gentle wooded scenery

tered. Soon I found myself at the mouth of a cave, which, from its gay decorations, I fancied was not unlike my Maria's favourite bower, to which she was wont to resort in the days of her happiness and mine. Festoons of flowers were hung over the entrance, and shed their fragrance all around. Hero began to bark; but Pierrot silenced him with a sign, and led me by the hand into the cave.

A female was sitting, with her face averted from the light. On hearing our foot-steps, she turned round. Oh God! it was Maria!

She was dressed in white, as on her wedding-day, and wore in her hair the coronet of orange flowers, the last virgin ornament of the young wife, which my hands had not detached from her brow.

Shall I attempt to describe my feelings, or to tell the variety of emotions which rose within my soul at that blissful hour. Oh no! Maria was in my arms. In that short sentence all earthly good was comprehended. I flew back to the days of happiness and peace, when no cloud obscured my azure sky. I dreamt that those days were returned; I believed that they would never end. Maria had in one mo-

about Revesby in Lincolnshire, and the groves of Serivatsby. I did not seem to miss the hedge rows, particularly when I saw the herd-boy driving up the horses or cows to the village, and heard the mocking-bird, whose tones, as they swept from the groves, were so much like those of the woodlark; the crows feeding in the fields of sun-burnt stubble, dark, like new ploughed lands, for they had been cleared by fire for the solstitial rains, and the pigeons starting from the dove-cot to the fields, were all so very English in this sort of level meadow scenery, that I could not help recurring to my friends and families far away; not so much desiring to be with them as wishing that some of them were with me to enjoy these landscapes

ment seen me, recognised me, uttered a shriek of surprise, thrown herself into my arms, and fainted with joy.

An old woman bearing a child rushed to her assistance; it was her nurse; the child, that of my uncle. Pierrot ran for water, and immediately returning, sprinkled it on her face.

Maria opened her eyes.

“Leopold, my Leopold!” was all she could utter.

“Maria!” I replied, and the rest of our words were lost in a long sweet kiss.

“And before me!” cried a heart-rending voice at that moment. We raised our eyes; it was Pierrot. I had forgotten him in my joy and surprise; and when I now beheld him, he was strangely agitated. His bosom heaved; a cold sweat stood on his brow; his limbs shook. In a short time he concealed his face with his hands, and darted out of the cave, exclaiming, “*Before me!*”

I looked after him in amazement, and Maria half disengaged herself from my arms, to follow him with her eyes.

“Leopold!” she cried, “what means this?” Our love seems to distress him; can it be that he loves me himself?”

The cry of the slave had proved him to be my rival; and now Maria’s exclamation convinced me that he was my friend.

“Maria,” I replied, and an indescribable feeling of happiness entered my heart, at the same moment with a mortal grief—“Can it be, Maria, that you did not know it?”

“I know it? I do not know it yet. He love me? it is impossible; I never observed the slightest token of such a thing.” I pressed her to my heart in transport.

“At the same moment,” I cried, “I recover my

wife and my friend. How happy I am; and alas, how guilty! I doubted his faith!"

"How?" said Maria, astonished, "You doubted him, Pierrot? You are indeed guilty. To him you owe my life twice; and—and" she cast down her eyes, and hiding her face in my bosom, added, in a low voice, "more than my life. The negroes were not less ferocious than the alligator; and he saved me from both."

"And why, love," said I, "did he not send you to the Cape to your husband?"

"He made the attempt, but it failed. Obliged to conceal himself as he was, both from the blacks and the whites, the thing was impossible. And then we knew not what had become of you. Some said that they had seen you fall; but Pierrot assured me it was untrue; and this I was convinced of myself, for I knew that *something* would have warned me of your fate, and that I should have died also."

"Then it was Pierrot who led you here?"

"Yes, my Leopold, he conveyed me to this cave, which is known only to himself, where I am secure from the depredations of his countrymen. He was also the means of saving my nurse and my little brother: all that remain of my unhappy father's family. His attention to me since my coming here has been respectful and unremitting. He brought me all my favourite flowers, he endeavoured to allay every fear; and often assured me that he would bring you to me in safety. It is three days since he has been here before, and I was becoming uneasy at his absence; but now he has come and restored me to my Leopold. I should like to live here always, Leopold; we should be peaceful and happy, far removed from the bustle of the world, and from the terrible scene of desolation which my poor father's property is now become." I listened to Maria with sadness. My be-

haviour to Pierrot pressed heavily on me. I abhorred myself for my suspicions, and determined to bury them all in devoted friendship.

“Our poor friend!” continued Maria; “his absence was caused by going to seek you, was it not?”

“It was.”

“Then how is that?” said she; “he cannot be in love with me; are you sure of it?”

“Now I am. It is he who, when on the point of stabbing me beneath your window, desisted, from the fear that you ‘would weep too much;’ and it is he who sang to you those songs of love in your favourite bower.”

“Indeed!” cried Maria, with ingenuous surprise, “and that strange marigold man is our good Pierrot! I can hardly believe it. He has always behaved so humbly and respectfully, much more so than when he was our slave. It is true, that sometimes he has looked at me with rather a singular expression; but it could have been nothing more than sympathy, and I set it down as compassion for the sufferings I had undergone. If you knew with what devotion he discoursed about yourself, my Leopold! his friendship spoke of you almost as warmly as my love.”

These explanations of Maria grieved and enchanted me at the same moment. I remembered with what cruelty I had treated this generous Pierrot; and now felt, in all its force, his tender and resigned reproach: “*It is not I who am ungrateful!*”

He entered the cave at this moment, with comparative composure, but with a dark and melancholy look. He looked like a prisoner who returns to the torture, but who triumphs over it. He advanced towards me with slow steps, and pointed to the dagger which I had placed in my girdle.

“The hour,” said he, “has expired.”

“Hour! what hour?”

“ The hour of life you granted me. It was necessary in order that I might bring thee here. I begged of thee then to spare my life; I now beg of thee to take it away.”

The sweetest sentiments of the heart—love, friendship, gratitude—combined at this moment to distract me. I fell at the feet of the slave, without power to utter a word: he raised me up hastily.

“ What is this?” cried he.

“ I render you the homage that is due to you; I am no longer worthy of your friendship; it is impossible that your gratitude can extend so far as to pardon my ingratitude.” His face had still some expression of severity; an internal struggle appeared to be going on; he stepped one pace towards me, and then recoiled; he opened his mouth to speak, yet remained silent. The conflict was but of short duration: he opened his arms.

“ May I now call thee brother?” said he. My answer was, to throw myself upon his breast. After a short pause—

“ Thou art good,” he added; “ but misery had rendered thee unjust.”

“ I have regained my brother,” cried I, “ and I am no longer unhappy; but still I am very guilty.”

“ Guilty! Oh, my brother, I have been so also, and more than thee! Thy misery, however, is at an end; but mine endures for ever!”

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN our feelings had somewhat subsided, I perceived a cloud gathering on Pierrot's brow. Something like fierceness glared in his eye, but softened by some touches of sadness. I saw he was on the point of breaking silence on a subject which lay near his heart.

“Listen,” said he, at length, but in a hard and cold tone. “Royal blood, black though it be, flows in my veins. My father was king over the extensive country of Kakongo, and he sat daily at the gate of his palace, administering justice to his subjects, and drinking after each sentence a cup of palm-wine, according to the custom of our kings. Peace and prosperity flourished in my father’s reign, and the harmony of his own household was an emblem of that of his whole empire.

“White men came among us; they told us of wonderful and unheard-of-things; they taught us many arts; but these, instead of adding to our happiness, only brought us discontent. Their leader, a Spanish captain, ingratiated himself with my father. He promised him greater countries than his own, and white women. He persuaded him to embark on board his ship with his whole family. Brother, they sold us!”

The chest of the black heaved; his eyes sparkled;

he broke, mechanically, a young medlar-tree* which was near him; and then continued, as before, but without addressing himself to me.

“The master of the country of Kakongo received a master; and his son bowed himself down a slave in the plantations of Santo Domingo. They separated the young lion from his old father, in order to subdue them more easily. They tore the young bride from her husband, in order to make greater profit by uniting them to others. The little children cried for the mother who had suckled them, and for the father who had bathed them in the torrents: they found only barbarous tyrants, and lay down among the dogs.”

He was silent; but his lips continued to move, and his look was wild and fixed. He seized me at length fiercely by the arm—

“Dost thou hear, brother?” said he; “I have been sold to different masters, like a piece of merchandise. Dost thou remember the execution of Ogé? On that day I saw again my father; listen: it was on the wheel!”

I shuddered, and he went on.

“My wife was prostituted to the whites. Hearken still; she is dead; and in dying demanded revenge. Shall I tell it thee?” and he hesitated, and cast down his eyes. “I was guilty; I loved another; no matter, let it pass. All my countrymen urged me to deliver them, and avenge myself; and I maintained a constant communication with them, by means of Hero, who brought me their messages. I was myself, however, at the moment, a prisoner of thy uncle, in Fort Galifet. On the day on which thou didst obtain my

* The nefflier is perhaps introduced, in mistake for the sapotille-tree, the fruit of which resembles a medlar in appearance, uniting the taste and flavour of the apple, pear, and medlar, though sweeter than them all.

pardon, tidings were brought to me that my children were undergoing punishment, and I ran to rescue them from their savage master. Brother! the last of the grandsons of the King of Kakongo had just expired under the blows of a white, the others had preceded him.” He interrupted himself.

“Brother!” said he, coldly, “what wouldest thou have done?” The reeital had made my blood run cold, and I answered with a gesture of menace.

He understood me; and continued with a bitter smile—

“My countrymen revolted, and revenged the murder of my children on their master. They chose me for their leader, and the insurrection blazed far and wide. I was concerned for the preservation of thy uncle’s property, and hastened to Acul, to restrain, if possible, the violence of the slaves. I arrived on the very night of the insurrection. I sought for thee, but in vain. I learned that thy uncle had been murdered in his bed. I saw the flames already rising around me; and I knew that the destruction of his estates had commenced, and that no earthly power could save them. It was in vain for me to command, to intercede; for my comrades, with whom I was now, since the death of my father, the fallen majesty of Kakongo, believed, that in destroying the whites, and their habitations, they were avenging their king.

“I then rushed to Fort Galifet, which the blacks were already besieging. I gained admittance, unseen, by my accustomed aperture. The next moment, the fort was taken, and a thick volume of smoke enveloped me. In despair, I ran through every part of the building to save thy uncle’s family. I found thy Maria, who had lingered to save her infant brother, surrounded by a desperate band, and about to become their victim; and I could only save her by demanding to be allowed to take vengeance with my own hand.

The infant I confided to Hero; and taking up thy wife in my arms, we fled from the fort.

“We reached this place in safety; its existence was known to none besides myself. And here has Maria lived unmolested, till now. Such, brother, is my crime!”

The story of the generous Pierrot again tinged my cheek with shame, for having ever doubted of his fidelity; and again called forth expressions of gratitude. To these, however, he listened with an offended air.

“Come, come!” said he; “it is now time for us all to leave this cave; it is no longer a sure place of retreat: take thy wife, and follow me.”

“Follow! whither?” said I, in surprise.

“To the camp of thy countrymen. To-morrow, at break of day, the white army will attack the camp of Biassou; and the forest will certainly be set on fire. There is not a moment to lose, for I am not free like thee: ten heads at this instant, answer for my return.”

“How?” exclaimed I, in surprise.

“Didst thou not hear that Bug-Jargal was taken prisoner?” said he, impatiently.

“Yes; but what of that? What have you to do with this Bug-Jargal?” He appeared surprised in his turn, but replied gravely—

“I am Bug-Jargal!”

This singular being had in so short a time undergone so many transformations, that the new character in which he now appeared, did not much surprise me. I felt, however, a sort of awe stealing over me, when I reflected that I was in the presence of the renowned negro-chief, Bug-Jargal. I had often heard his name before, and knew that it was associated in the minds of the colonists with all that is terrible in battle, and magnanimous in victory.

I could not understand the homage that was paid by the rebels, and even by Biassou himself, to the famous Bug-Jargal, to the landless, crownless king of Kakongo. He did not appear to observe the effect which his name had produced on me; but after a short pause, proceeded in his explanation of his own situation.

“I was told,” said he, “that on thy part thou wert a prisoner in the camp of Biassou, and I came to deliver thee.”

“But you have just said that you yourself are not free?” He looked at me, as if endeavouring to divine what this very natural remark tended to.

“Listen!” said he: “this morning I was a prisoner in the hands of thy countrymen, and learnt accidentally, that a young officer, named Leopold d’Auverney, had been taken prisoner by the blacks, and was to suffer death before sunset in the camp of Biassou. The intended execution greatly exasperated the whites, and they determined unanimously, that whenever the death of D’Auverney was announced, that of Bug-Jargal should follow; and that in the event of my escape, ten of my countrymen should suffer in my stead.”

“And you did escape?” said I.

“How else am I here? Was it not necessary to save thee? Did I not owe thee my life? Come, let us make haste; we are an hour’s walk from either camp, the white and the black. Look at the lengthening shadow of those cocoa-trees; their round heads look on the grass like the enormous egg of the condor. In three hours the sun will set. Come, brother, come!”

“*In three hours the sun will set!*” These simple words froze my blood like an apparition. They recalled to me the fatal promise I had made to Biassou. Alas! when clasping Maria again in my arms, I never

thought of our near and eternal separation! The intoxication of joy, the crowd and hurry of so many new and delicious emotions, had overwhelmed my memory, and I forgot my death in my happiness. My friend's unconscious remark threw me back into myself. "*In three hours the sun will set!*" In one hour I must again be in the camp of Biassou. My duty was clear before me; the tiger had taken my word, and it was better to die than to give him the right of despising the only thing his infidel soul believed in: the honour of a Frenchman. The alternative was terrible. Forgive me if I hesitated: it was but for a moment.

At length, with a bitter sigh, I took with one hand the hand of Bug-Jargal, and with the other that of my poor Maria, who was gazing anxiously on the cloud that had fallen on my countenance.

"My friend," said I, with an effort, "I leave in thy charge the only being on earth whom I love more than thee! Return to the camp without me, for I cannot follow you!"

"My God!" cried Maria, "what new misery is this?"

"Brother, answer!" said Bug-Jargal, struck with terror and astonishment. The condition in which I saw Maria, from the mere idea of a misfortune which her love appeared to divine, rendered it impossible for me to tell her at once the fatal truth. I could not—not for worlds at that moment could I have taken leave of her; and leaning towards my friend, I said to him in a low voice—

"I am a prisoner. I have sworn to Biassou to return and put myself in his power two hours before sunset. I have promised to die!" He sprang from the ground with fury in his countenance, and thunder in his voice.

"Wretch! monster! demon!" cried he, "has he

thus dared to deceive me? Was it for this he took thee aside after promising me thy life and liberty. Why did I not suspect such perfidy? He is not a black, but a mulatto!"

"What is all this? What perfidy? what promise?" exclaimed Maria, startled from her stupor.

"Hush!" said I, aside, "not a word! let us not alarm her."

"Why didst thou consent?" continued he; "for what purpose?"

"When I made the promise, I believed thee to be a hypocrite, and Maria lost to me for ever. What then was life to me?"

"But," replied he, with impatience, "thy promise is of no consequence; who keeps his promise with a villain?"

"I pledged my word of honour," said I.

He appeared to try to comprehend what I said.

"Thy word of honour! what is that? Thou hast not drank together from the same cup, nor broken a ring with him, nor a branch of the red-blossomed maple?"

"No."

"What binds thee, then?"

"My honour," replied I.

"Thy honour! I do not know what that means. Nothing can bind thee to Biassou. Come with us!"

"I cannot, brother, I have promised ____"

"No, thou hast not promised," said he, passionately. Then turning to Maria—

"Sister," said he, "join in my entreaties to thy husband. I have no sooner delivered him from the hands of Biassou, than he wishes to go back to die, under pretence of a promise."

"Silence!" cried I, "what have you done?" but it was too late to prevent the effect of this generous movement on the part of my friend, who implored, to

save the life of his rival, the assistance of her whom he loved. Oh! what a pang went through my soul; how perfectly wretched did I feel myself to be! I was voluntarily tearing myself from all that I held dear, just after I had hoped to be restored to them for ever. Maria had thrown herself into my arms with a cry of despair, and hung round my neck breathless and fainting.

“What does he say?” murmured she, with painful efforts. “Tell me that it is a mistake, and that my Leopold will not leave me for ever at the very moment of our meeting. Answer quickly; quickly, or it will be too late, for I feel as if I was dying! You have no right to surrender your life, for mine is bound up in it, and the same blow will kill us both. Will you, indeed, go; and do we part to meet no more?”

“Not so? we part, but we shall meet again: yes, we shall meet; somewhere else——”

“Somewhere else! Where?”

“In heaven!” cried I; for I dared not tell the angel a falsehood. Maria fainted.

Time pressed, my honour was sacred, and I prepared to depart, and placed her in the arms of Bug-Jargal, whose eyes were filled with tears.

“Will nothing stop thee?” said he; “wilt thou resist even *Maria*? Who could imagine that her entreaties would be unavailing? I do not comprehend thee. For a single word from her lips, I would have sacrificed the world, and thou wilt not abandon even a resolution to die.”

“Honour!” replied I. “Adieu! brother. I bequeath her to thee.”

“I cannot accept the trust,” said he, mournfully, and seeming hardly to comprehend what I said; “but there is one of thy relations in the white camp, to whom I will deliver her. As for myself, thy fate is not more certain than mine. Seest thou that highest

peak in the distance, which is gilded by the sun? There thy death shall be announced by the roar of the fatal musketry, and the sound of mine in the camp of the whites will answer like an echo. Adieu! my brother; remember, our friendship dies not, even in death!"

I did not wait to understand the meaning of his last words: we embraced in silence. I then turned to the insensible Maria, and impressed a kiss on her pale and lovely brow. I waited not to bid her farewell, fearing to encounter another glance of her eye, which was now slowly re-opening, but retreated backwards, contemplating the form which I should never behold again. At length I summoned resolution and fled from the spot, leaving all my earthly joys behind, and turning my face to that interminable future, to whose awful barrier I was now so fast approaching.

CHAPTER XXII.

I PLUNGED into the deep forest, following the track by which we had come, and not daring to cast a look behind me. I sprang forward over hill, copse, and savanna, as if to escape from the thoughts that haunted me, till at length, on turning the corner of a cliff, I saw the camp of Biassou, with its lines of *ajoupas*, and ant-like swarms of blacks spread out before my eyes.

I stood still: the goal of my race and of my life were both at hand. I leant exhausted against a tree, and allowed my eyes to wander unconsciously over the picture displayed in the fatal savanna at my feet.

Till this moment I had thought that the bitterness of death was past, and that existence had nothing new for me to endure. I was ignorant that the most cruel of all miseries is the being obliged by a moral impulse, independent of the impulse of events, to renounce deliberately happiness while happy, life while living. Some hours before, what should I have cared to remain in the world? I could not be said to be alive; for despair is a metaphorical death, in which our only feeling is a wish for the literal one. But I had been relieved from this despair; Maria was returned to me; my dead happiness was resuscitated; my past was become my future; and all my vanished dreams were brought back to my eyes, more beautiful, more

dazzling than ever. Life in short, a life of youth, and love, and enchantment, was displayed anew before me; and the picture, glorious and interminable, only melted from my vision in the distant sunlight. This life I could recommence; this happiness I could begin again at the starting-post. Nay, I was invited, impelled to do so, by everything within and without me. No material obstacle, no visible difficulty intervened; I was free, I was happy, and yet it was necessary to die!

I had actually been re-awakened to love and joy; I had actually re-commenced that enchanted life to which I seemed to be called by the angels of heaven and the genii of earth; I had made one step into my Eden, and a power unseen and intangible, unrecognised by the senses, and disallowed by the soul, forced me back to the tomb. To the tomb! the tomb is nothing to a soul already frozen and decayed; but how terrible is the touch of death when it falls, dark and chill, upon a heart warm in love and radiant with joy! This was my case; this was the misery of miseries reserved to me for the dregs of my cup of life. I had been like one raised from the dead; I had come forth from the sepulchre, and for one moment enjoyed everything most delicious, most intoxicating, most celestial on earth; and now, in the midst of all—of love, friendship, liberty, I must descend again into the tomb!

When the weakness of sorrow was past, a kind of rage seized my soul. I sprang forwards into the valley, and presented myself at the advanced posts of the negroes. They appeared surprised, and refused to admit me. Strange contrariety! I was obliged almost to entreat them to accept of my head. Two of them at length laid hold of me, and led me into the presence of Biassou.

The manner in which he was occupied was not

calculated to soothe my mind. The ground around him was strewed with iron instruments of various descriptions, and he employed himself in examining their state of efficiency, and trying their springs. These were the tools with which Biassou, expert in every cruel art, tortured his helpless victims. He turned his head at the noise made by my guards in introducing me, but he did not appear surprised when he saw me. He looked at me for a moment with a careless air, and then resumed his occupation.

“Dost thou see?” said he at last, pointing to the instruments. I looked steadily at him, without moving a muscle. I knew well the atrocity of the ‘*hero of humanity*,’ and I was determined to endure to the last without shrinking.

“Ah!” said he, *ricanant*, “happy surely was Leogri in being hung: every criminal does not die the same gentle death.” I looked at him in disdainful silence.

“So,” he continued, “thou affectest contempt for these things? Ha! ha! well, to the proof. Never yet did Biassou see the morsel of living flesh which shrunk not from his iron grasp;” and at the same time he held up in triumph an instrument something like a thumb-screw.

“My flesh may shrink,” said I, “for the body has its own instincts; but my spirit knows how to endure.” A pause ensued; an interval that the mind of both filled up. We looked one another in the face.

At this moment Rigaud entered, with marked alarm in his countenance; and in an energetic manner said something to the general which I did not hear.

“Let the chiefs be assembled,” said Biassou, calmly. Bustle and confusion soon reigned throughout the camp, and I almost forgot my own situation, as I beheld with curiosity the negro-chiefs assembling

in the cavern. Scarcely two were clothed alike; but each seemed to vie with the other in the absurdity of his appearance.

When they had all taken their seats, Biassou rose.

“Listen, *amigos!*” said he, “the whites are to attack us here to-morrow at daybreak. Our position is bad, and we must quit it. Let us put ourselves in march at sunset for the Spanish frontiers. Macaya, your maroon blacks will form the advanced guard of the army; next in order will march the warriors of Croix des Bouquets; then Toussaint with the blacks of Leogane and Trou, and Cloud with the mulattoes, followed by the bands of Dondon and of Acul. Rigaud’s troop will march next to the body-guard, which Caudi will of course command. The blacks of the Morne Rouge will form the rear-guard, and are not to march till sunrise. Padrejau will spike the artillery, which we cannot carry with us through the mountains. The neighbouring forest must be immediately set on fire, and all the avenues to the camp blocked up with rocks, to secure our retreat. Balls must be cast, and arrows poisoned, and above all, at least three tons of arsenic thrown into the spring which supplies the camp. The planters may take it for sugar, if they will.

“As for the troops of the Morne Rouge,” added Biassou, speaking in a whisper to Rigaud, when he had concluded his public speech; “as for the followers of Bug-Jargal, instead of delaying their march till sun-rise, if we could crush them where they are, why, ‘*Muerta la tropa, muerta la jefe!*’* ”

“Come, *hermanos*,” continued he aloud, “away with you now: Caudi will bring you the word of command.”

* The band dead, the chief dead!

Rigaud then reminded Biassou of the overtures to peace, which, if immediately forwarded to the white camp might result in something advantageous; and the chief hurriedly drew the letter from his pocket.

“You do well to remind me of it,” said he, “but there are so many errors of grammar in it, as they call them, that I fear they will only laugh at it.”

He then presented the paper to me.

“I give thee another opportunity of saving thy life,” said he; “our ideas are contained in that sheet; arrange them in due form, and above all, use expedition, for time presses.”

I made a sign of refusal: he appeared out of patience.

“Is it no?” said he.

“No!” replied I. He insisted.

“Think!” said he, “think!” and his look seemed to invite mine to the equipage of torture which lay before him.

“I have already thought,” replied I; “and that is why I refuse. You appear to be afraid for yourself and your people, and you reckon upon this letter as a means of retarding the march and the vengeance of the whites. I should not save a life that preserved yours. Commence my punishment as soon as you will.”

“Ah! ah! *muchaco!*” said Biassou, thrusting away the instruments with his feet; “I see thy sight is already familiar with them. Well, thy punishment will commence soon enough, I promise thee; I am only sorry that I shall not have the pleasure of inflicting it myself; but the necessary preparations for our march will put it out of my power. Now that the thing is settled, I may as well tell thee that thou must have died at any rate; for no man ever yet lived with a secret of Biassou in his breast. But apart

from this, I had promised thy death to Monsieur le Chapelain."

The chaplain entered at this moment, and Biassou turned towards him.

"*Bon père*," said he, "are your men ready?"

The *bon père* made an affirmative sign.

"Have you composed them of the blacks of Morne Rouge? They are the only soldiers in the army not yet obliged to busy themselves in preparations for the march."

The *bon père* said "Yes," by giving a nod of the head.

Biassou, for the evident purpose of appalling me, then directed my attention to the large black flag I had already observed displayed in a corner of the grotto.

"When that flag," said he, "floats in the evening breeze, thou wilt be numbered with the dead. It will serve as a signal to thy people that they may give thy epaulette to the lieutenant. By that time I shall have set out on my march."

I stood unmoved.

"By-the-bye," continued Biassou, "you have been walking. Are the suburbs clear? Did you see anything worthy of remark?"

"Nothing," replied I, "but trees in sufficient number to hang thee and thy whole band."

"Well," said he, with a forced *ricanement*, "there is one place thou hast not seen; and with it the *bon père* will presently make thee acquainted. But young captain ——"

"Well, rebel slave?"

"Ha! ha! thou wilt remember my commission?"

"I have forgotten it."

"What! the message to Leogri? Well, then, now that it is brought to thy mind, away at once, lest thou forget it again."

He saluted me with his usual laugh, which brought to my mind the noise of the rattle-snake; and making a gesture to the attendants, turned his back. The negroes then took hold of me, and dragged me away, accompanied by the veiled Ouanga, his chaplet in his hand.

We walked on in silence till we reached the ridge of a hill situated on the east of the savanna. There my guards lay down to rest, and I had leisure for a moment to contemplate the evening glories of the sun, about to hide itself from me for ever. I was roused from my saddening reflections by my guards, who, in an insolent tone, informed me that they were about to resume their march.

I soon found myself descending into a valley, with the beauty of which I should have at any other time been charmed. It was watered by a mountain torrent, which poured its free and crystal stream into a lake at its extremity. Such lakes are often to be met with in the mountainous parts of St. Domingo; and often in the hour of twilight, in other and happier days, have I laid myself along their banks, and contemplated the azure expanse changing into a plain of silver, spangled with the first stars of the evening. No wind agitated their surface; their unruffled calm seemed but the counterpart of my own tranquil bosom. Often when seated by the bank of one of those lakes, did I dream of the happiness of future and distant years; often did my warm imagination conjure up scenes of ideal felicity, where Maria, the bright star of my destiny, presided in all her glory; and often, ay, always, did I return from those fairy regions to the world of mortals, without even a doubt suggesting itself of the wildest dreams of my fancy being realised.

The valley which we were traversing was luxuriantly covered with an endless variety of trees and

shrubs. The spot, indeed, seemed to be one of peculiar fertility; and even the perpendicular rocks which lined the valley, were covered by many a beauteous creeping flower. A delightful fragrance filled the air, and the song of the winged inhabitants of the valley, before retiring to their rest, completed the delicious sensation.

Around us were plane-trees of prodigious height; bosquets tufted with mauritius: a kind of palm, beneath whose branches no other vegetation can live; magnolias, with their large cups; and catalpas, exhibiting their carved and polished leaves among the golden clusters of the ebony-tree. The odier of Canada mingled its pale yellow flowers with the blue aureolas of the sort of wild honey-suckle which the negroes call coali. Verdant curtains of lianas, waving in the wind, displayed to view the dark sides of the neighbouring rock. Everywhere there rose from the virgin soil a perfume like that which the first man might have inhaled from the new roses of Eden.

My conductors led me along a narrow path which winded with the stream: it soon terminated abruptly at the foot of an isolated rock, and I perceived an opening in the form of an arch, through which the torrent issued. The negroes kept to the left on entering the cavern, and dragging me with them, our path seemed to be along the bed of a dried up torrent; but I could hardly distinguish any object from the darkness and the number of thorns and brambles which opposed themselves to our progress.

When my eyes became accustomed to the light, I found myself in a vault of considerable size, along one side of which the torrent rushed with a hoarse melancholy roar. The chaplain or Ouanga now approached me.

“Behold!” said he, “the accomplishment of what I so lately predicted to thee. Only one of us two

shall leave this place and return to the light of day!"

I disdained to reply; and we continued to advance in the darkness till the echoing roar of the torrent became gradually louder and more appalling, and the noise of our own footsteps could no longer be heard. I presumed that we were approaching a waterfall, and the supposition turned out to be correct.

After walking for nearly ten minutes we reached a sort of platform, formed by nature in the very heart of the hill. It was in the form of a semicircle, and was partly washed by the stream which gushed from all the fissures of the rock with a dismal noise. The vault at this place was covered with natural tapestry of ivy of a yellow colour, and was dimly lighted by a crevice in the roof of some length, through which I could see trees gilded by the rays of the setting sun.

At the northern extremity of the platform, the torrent descended with a frightful noise into a gulf, on which floated a feeble ray of the light from above. An old tree leant over the abyss, its topmost branches washed by the foam of the waterfall, and its root inserted in the solid rock, about two feet below the brink, and projecting a considerable way into the stream. Its branches were destitute of foliage, and scarcely evinced any sign of vitality. The want of sunshine and the violence of the cataract hindered the production of leaves or blossoms, while the moisture with which it was impregnated counteracted the speedy decay which would otherwise have ensued. It seemed like a dead body, yet incapable of corruption. In that moment I looked on the tree with interest. I wondered how it had sprung up in such a spot, and how long it had bent, solitary and dismantled, over the impetuous stream. Such inquiries, I was soon reminded, were irrelevant to my present situation.

The blacks stopped short on approaching the cas-

cade, and looked at their leader as if to learn his farther pleasure. Death now faced me in one of its most terrible forms; the tremendous roar of the cataract, the almost impenetrable darkness, and the occasion of our presence in such a place, all combined to overwhelm me.

Here, in this gulf, into which I had precipitated myself voluntarily, as it were, the image of the happiness I had renounced a few hours before, came upon my soul like a regret and almost a remorse. Yet I struggled to maintain my resolution of dying like a man and a Frenchman; and whatever might be my internal feelings, of bearing an undaunted front before my cowardly and treacherous foe. One note of lamentation did escape me: I tried to work on the feelings of the wretches who surrounded me; but I had no sooner made the attempt than I felt it to be unworthy of me.

“My friends,” said I, to the negroes around me, “it is a sad thing to be torn from life in the midst of youth, and health, and joy. I am but twenty years of age, and leave friends behind me who will mourn for ever over my unhappy fate.”

A burst of horrible laughter followed my complaint. It proceeded from the lips of the little Ouanga; and this malignant imp, this impenetrable being, approached me abruptly.

“Ha! ha! ha!” said he; “and so thou regrestest life? I thought as much, though thy foolish pride endeavoured to conceal thy terror. My joy is greater even than I anticipated; I knew I should have the satisfaction of thy death, but I did not know my captive would confess to me like a good Christian before his punishment. *Labado sea dios!* My only fear was that thou hadst no fear.”

It was the same voice, the same laugh, which had already fatigued and baffled my conjectures.

“Wretch!” cried I, “tell me who thou art?”

“Ha! ha! ha! does that concern thee? Well, I will tell thee. Look here!” and he took off the large silver star which covered his breast, placing himself, at the same time, in the most favourable situation which the light permitted for being seen. I bent down towards him, and looked at his naked breast, but saw nothing, save that it was covered with hair. On a more minute gaze, however, I detected two words, branded with a hot iron—the hideous and ineffaceable traces which mark the bosoms of slaves—and the one was ‘Effingham,’ and the other ‘D’Auverney,’ my uncle’s name and mine! I was motionless with surprise.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“HAST thou read, Leopold d’Auverney?” demanded the Ouanga. “Does thy name declare mine to thee?”

I grew confused, and hesitated what answer to make, till at length, trying to rally my recollections, I replied—

“Those two names were never united but on the breast of the buffoon; but he is dead, the poor dwarf! and, besides, he was attached to us. No! it is not possible that you are Habibrah!”

“I am he!” replied the Ouanga, in a voice as hoarse as the raven’s; and pulling off the blood-stained gorra, he removed his veil, and displayed the identical features of the dwarf, as ugly and deformed as ever, but their gaiety and humour of the days of old were exchanged for a menacing and sinister expression.

“Great God!” cried I, stupefied by the sight: “another dead alive! It is Habibrah, my uncle’s buffoon!” The dwarf put his hand to his dagger, and added, in a hollow voice—

“And his murderer!”

I recoiled in horror.

“His murderer! Wretch! is it thus you returned his indulgence?”

“His indulgence? his insults!”

“Can it be possible! And it was you who stabbed him?”

“Yes, I!” replied he, with a horrible expression. “I struck the dagger so deep into his heart, that he had scarcely time to awake from sleep to enter into death. He cried faintly: ‘Habibrah! I was there!’”

“Cowardly assassin! ungrateful monster! Was it thus you repaid the favours he lavished upon you alone? You ate at his table, you slept near his bed, ——”

“Like a dog!” interrupted Habibrah: “*como un perro!* Away! I remember only too well such favours. I am not likely to forget an insult! I am avenged on him, and I am now about to be avenged on thee! What! dost thou think that, because I was a mulatto, and a deformed and hideous dwarf, I was not a man? A man! I have a soul stronger and more deep than that of which I shall presently deliver thy girlish body. I was given to thy uncle for a toy. I assisted him in his pleasures, and served as food for his contempt! Loved me, say’st thou? True, I had a place in his heart, between his ape and his parroquet: I chose another for myself with the point of my dagger!”

I shuddered.

“Yes, I am Habibrah,” continued he. “Look well at me, Leopold d’Auverney: assure thyself that Habibrah does, indeed, stand before thee. Ay! look in my face: turn not away: thou hast laughed often enough at me, and now thou shalt shudder!”

“And now tell me—thou recallest to my memory the shameful predilection of thy uncle for him whom he termed his buffoon. Predilection! *Bon Giu!* When I entered your feasting rooms I was received by a thousand disdainful laughs. My shape, my deformities, my features, my ridiculous dress, everything, even to the pitiable infirmities of my nature, was subject of raillery to thy execrable uncle and his

execrable friends. And I—I could not even remain a silent witness of the scorn of others; it was necessary—*O rabia!*—to mingle my own laughter with the laughter I excited. Answer! Dost thou think that such humiliation has a title to the gratitude of a human being! Dost thou think it was easier to bear than the hardships of the other slaves? the tasks, the toils, the burning sun, the iron collars, and the scourge of the drivers? Dost thou think it was not sufficient to sow in the heart of a man a hatred as indelible as the stigma of infamy stamped upon my breast?

“O! how brief is my vengeance compared with the duration of my sufferings! Why could I not inflict upon my hateful tyrants the undying torments that are within me? Why did not *he*, before escaping from life, experience the bitterness of wounded pride, and feel the burning traces of the tears of rage and shame that wither the face condemned to a perpetual laugh? Hard! hard! to wait so long for the hour of vengeance, and then to be satisfied with the blow of a dagger! Still it would have been something could he have known the hand that slew him. But I was too impatient to glut my ear with his death-rattle. I struck too deep and too suddenly; and he died without seeing his executioner, and thus baffled my vengeance.

“This time, at least, my purpose will be complete. Thou seest me well, dost thou not? although, indeed, thou may’st be somewhat puzzled to recognise me in the new light in which I appear. Thou never sawest me before but in a gay and joyous character; and now that nothing prevents my soul from showing itself in my eyes, I can hardly resemble myself. Hitherto, thou hast only known my mask: behold now my face!”

I looked. I had looked from the moment in which

his veil was removed; my eyes were fascinated as if by a spell. The sight was horrible!

“Monster!” said I, “you are in part deceived; there still lingers something of the jester and the mountebank amidst all the atrocity of your features and your heart.”

“Speak not to me of atrocity!” interrupted Habibrah; “think of the cruelty of thy uncle —”

“Wretch!” cried I, indignant; “if he was cruel, he was stimulated to cruelty by you. Complain of the fate of the miserable slaves! Why, then, did you turn against them the influence which the weakness of your master permitted you to possess?”

“Truly, it would have given me pleasure to have hindered a white from sullying himself with an atrocity! Why, what a fool art thou! I urged him, on the contrary, to redouble his bad treatment of the slaves, to the end of hastening the hour of revolt, and of producing from the excess of oppression the excess of revenge. In appearing to injure my brethren I was their best friend.”

I stood confounded at the spectacle of a hatred so deep.

“Well,” continued the dwarf, “what sayest thou now of the buffoon, Habibrah! What thinkest thou of thy uncle’s fool? Was he able to think? Was he able to execute?”

“Finish the plan,” said I, “you have so well begun; kill me, but make haste.”

He began to stride up and down the platform, rubbing his hands.

“And if it should not be my pleasure to make haste?” said he. “If I should choose to amuse myself at my leisure with thy anguish? Who has any right to prevent me? Biassou owed me my share of the last booty; and when I saw thee at the camp of the blacks, I demanded for my portion thy life, which

he eagerly granted. It is mine. The fancy was expensive, and it is proper to enjoy it. Be quiet; but I ought to tell thee before hand, that, having discovered the retreat of thy wife, I suggested to Biassou the necessity of setting fire to the forest. The flames are already rising, and the wood crackling: the funeral pile of so many noxious animals. Hark! didst thou hear a scream? No, it was fancy; I cannot enjoy everything at once. I must content myself with knowing that thy uncle perished by the sword, that thou art to die by water, and thy Maria by fire!"

"Villain! villain!" cried I, and I would have sprung like a roused tiger at his throat.

"Seize him!" he shrieked, as he eluded me, "his hour is come; bind him, and bend him to the earth!"

At the word, the negroes threw themselves upon me, and began in silence to tie me with ropes, which they had brought with them for the purpose. At that moment I thought I heard the distant bark of a dog, and listened breathlessly, with a vague hope springing up in my mind. It was only an illusion, however, caused by the roar of the waterfall. The negroes finished their task: I was firmly bound; and carried to the edge of the gulf which was appointed for my tomb. The dwarf, crossing his arms, looked at me with joy and triumph blazing in his eyes. I raised mine once more to the crevice above my head, partly to avoid his hideous look, and partly to behold for the last time the far skies beyond. Suddenly, another sound, louder and more distinct, resounded through the vault. It *was* the bark of a dog; and in an instant I saw the enormous head of Hero thrust through the opening. My heart leaped.

"Now!" cried the dwarf; and the blacks, who had not heard the bark of the dog, raised me up to fling me into the abyss.

"Comrades!" cried a voice of thunder at that mo-

ment. All turned round; it was Bug-Jargal. He stood on the brink of the opening above, looking down upon the scene; a red feather floating over his brow.

“Hold! I command you!” continued he. The negroes fell prostrate on their faces.

“I am Bug-Jargal!” They struck the ground with their foreheads, uttering cries, of which it was difficult to distinguish the expression.

“Unbind the prisoner!” cried the chief.

Here the dwarf appeared to awake from the stupor into which this unexpected apparition had plunged him; and he seized the arms of the blacks, who were about to cut the bonds.

“How!” cried he. “What is all this? *Que quiere decir eso?*” Then raising his head towards the intruder, “Chief of the Morne Rouge,” he continued, “what is your purpose here?”

“I come,” replied the chief, “to take the command of my comrades.”

“Indeed!” and the dwarf ground his teeth with rage. “They *are* negroes of the Morne Rouge! But by what right,” and he raised his voice; “do you interfere with my prisoner?”

“I am Bug-Jargal!”

At the word the blacks struck the earth again with their foreheads.

“Bug-Jargal,” replied Habibrah, “cannot undo what Biassou has done. This white was given to me by the generalissimo: I desire that he shall die; and he shall die. *Vosotros!*” continued he, turning to the blacks, “Obey! Whirl him into the gulf!”

At the potent voice of the Ouanga, the negroes rose at once, and advanced towards me. I thought it was all over.

“Unbind the prisoner!” cried Bug-Jargal. In an instant I was free. My surprise was as great as the

rage of the Ouanga. He would have darted upon me like a tiger-cat, had not the blacks withheld him; and while struggling in their arms, he poured forth a torrent of threats and imprecations.

“*Demonios! rabia! infierno de mi alma!*” shrieked he. “How, wretches! you refuse to obey me! You do not know *mi voz!* Why, in the name of all the devils, did I lose those precious moments in listening to *este maldicho?* I should have made them cast him at once to the fishes *del baratro*. In order to enjoy a complete vengeance, I have lost the whole. *O rabia de Sathan! escuchate vosotros!* If you do not obey me, if you do not hurl this execrable white into the gulf, I will curse ye! Do you know the power of my curse; ha? Your hair will become white; you will be devoured living by birds of prey; your legs and your arms will bend under you like a reed; your breath will pass through your throat like burning sand; you will die early, and after death your spirits will be banished to the cold moon, there to roll everlastinglly a mill-stone as large as a mountain!”

This scene produced on me a singular effect. The only white man in this dark and damp cavern, surrounded by negroes resembling demons, hung, as it were, on the brink of a bottomless abyss, threatened on one side by a hideous dwarf, a priest of the infernal angels, whose striped vestments and pointed mitre were dimly seen in the faint light, and protected on the other by a gigantic black, standing in the only point where the sky was visible; it seemed to me that I was at the gate of hell, awaiting the fate of my soul, and looking on at the struggle between my bad genius and my guardian angel.

The blacks appeared terrified at the curses of the Ouanga, and the latter, eager to profit by this indecision, seized the moment.

“I desire that the white shall die,” cried he. “You will obey; he shall die!”

“He shall live!” replied Bug-Jargal. “My father was king of the country of Kakong, and administered justice sitting at the gate.” The blacks were again prostrate on the ground.

“Away, brothers!” pursued the chief, “and tell Biassou that he need not unfurl on the mountain the black flag which was to announce to the whites the death of his captive. This captive has saved the life of Bug-Jargal, and Bug-Jargal desires that he shall live!”

They rose up; and the chief threw down among them his plume of red feathers. The captain of the detachment, crossing his arms upon his breast, lifted it up respectfully, and the whole retired without uttering a word. The Ouanga disappeared along with them in the gloom of the subterranean avenue.

I shall not attempt to describe my feelings on this turn of fate. I fixed my wet eyes on Pierrot, who on his side gazed upon me with a singular expression of pride and gratitude.

“God be praised,” said he at length, “that thou art saved! Brother, return as thou camest, thou wilt find me in the valley.”

He motioned to me with his hand, and retired.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EAGER to reach the rendezvous, and to learn by what miracle of good fortune my preserver had been able to appear at the critical moment, I made haste to quit the cavern. All, however, was not yet over. When about to enter the subterranean gallery, my progress was stopped by Habibrah himself!

The inveterate Ouanga had not followed the negroes as I supposed; he concealed himself behind a point of the rock, and there awaited the moment of vengeance. That moment was come; and the dwarf sprang out upon my path with a laugh that echoed through the cavern. He was low in stature, it is true, but of enormous breadth of chest, and corresponding vigour of arm. I was alone, and unarmed; and as I saw the crucifix-dagger gleaming in his hand, I stepped back involuntarily.

“Ha! ha! *maldicho!*” cried he, “thou thoughtst to escape me! But the fool, it seems, is less a fool than thou. I have thee again, and now thou shalt not lose patience, nor I time. Thou shalt keep thy rendezvous in the valley, but the waves of the torrent shalt conduct thee to it.” And so saying, he raised his dagger, and threw himself upon me.

“Monster!” cried I, recoiling: “Hitherto you were only an executioner, but now you are an assassin!”

“An avenger!” cried he, grinding his teeth.

At that moment I stood on the edge of the precipice; and he sprang towards me to strike me back with his poignard. But suddenly eluding him, his foot slipped on the moss, wet with the spray of the torrent, and he staggered and fell, rolling upon the shelving brink of the steep, smoothed and rounded by the action of the waters.

“Thousand devils!” roared the dwarf. He had fallen into the abyss.

I have said, that at this place the roots of an old tree projected from the crevices of the granite, a little way below the brink. Habibrah met them in his fall; and his laced petticoat being caught in the stumps, he clutched the support with a death-gripe. His mitred bonnet fell from his head, and with the now disregarded dagger, tumbled into the depths of the cataract: strange comrades; the blade of an assassin and the jingling cap of a buffoon!

Thus suspended over the terrible gulf, he attempted, in vain, to regain the platform; for his arms were too short to reach the top, and it was impossible to dig even his nails into the surface of the rock, which overhung the abyss. He yelled with rage and terror.

The smallest effort on my part would have sufficed to plunge him into the torrent; but I did not dream of such an act of cowardice for a moment: this moderation appeared to strike him. Thanking heaven for the unexpected deliverance, I determined to leave him to his fate; and was already quitting the spot, when I heard the voice of the dwarf rising from the abyss.

“Master!” cried he, leave me not for pity’s sake! In the name of the *bon Giu*, leave not to die, guilty and impenitent, a human being, when it is in your power to save! Alas! my strength fails, the branch bends and slips in my hand, the weight of my body

is dragging me down, I must let go, or it will break! Alas! master, the terrible whirlpool is beneath me, shrieking for its prey. *Nombre santo de Dios!* will you have no pity on the poor buffoon? He is guilty, I confess; but will you not prove to him that the whites are more merciful than the mulattoes, the masters than the slaves?"

I had approached the brink of the precipice moved almost to pity; and the dim light, which descended from the opening above, exhibited in the repulsive features of the dwarf, a new expression which I had never seen there before; an expression of entreaty and distress.

"*Senor Leopold!*" he exclaimed, encouraged by the pity he had perhaps read in my countenance, "is it possible that a man can see his fellow-man in a situation so horrible without relieving him? Alas, master, give me your hand, and save me! It is so much for me to receive, and so little for you to grant! You will save a man's life with the end of your finger; help! help! I beseech you, and my gratitude will at least equal my crimes."

"Wretch!" said I, "remind me not of your crimes!"

"Oh! master, it is only because I hate them! Be more generous than I. Oh! God, I sink! I fall! *Ay desdichado!* Your hand! your hand! in the name of the mother who bore you!"

I cannot express to you how doleful was this voice of terror and suffering. I forgot every thing at the sound. It was no longer an enemy, a traitor, an assassin, who was before me, but a miserable being, whom the smallest effort on my part could rescue from a frightful death. He implored me so pitifully! A word, a sign of reproach would have been useless or absurd; all I had to do was to aid him; and kneeling down on the brink, I clasped with one hand the tree

on which the unfortunate Habibrah hung, and extended to him the other.

It was no sooner within his reach, than seizing it with both his, instead of making use of the proffered means of safety, I felt him attempting, with all his might, to drag me down with him into the abyss. But for the trunk of the tree, I should infallibly have been lost,

“Villain!” cried I, “what is it you do?”

“I avenge myself!” replied he, with a frightful laugh. “Fool! fool! I have thec at last. Thou hast delivered thyself to me of thy own accord. Thou wast saved and I was lost; and thou camest again into the throat of the cayman, because it groaned after it had roared! I now die contented, since my death is my revenge. Thou art taken in the snare, *amigo*, and I shall have a human companion among the fishes of the lake below.”

“Traitor!” said I, struggling; “this is the way I am rewarded, for having wished to save you!”

“Yes, the very way! I knew that I could escape by thy means; but I love better to perish with thee; I love better thy death than my own life. Come, no more trifling, let us die!” At the same moment, he grasped my hand within his hard and bronzed fingers, till the blood sprung; his eycs blazed; he foamed at the mouth; his strength, of which he had so lately deplored the loss, returned anew, reinforced by rage and vengeance; his feet supported him, in the manner of a lever, on the perpendicular side of the rock; and he shook like a tiger the tree, which, mingled with his garments, held him up in spite of himself; and which he would fain have broken away, that the whole weight of his body might be put into the scale against me. Disappointed and furious, he tore the root with his teeth, and the next moment laughed wildly, as if in ridicule of the impotence of the effort. One might

have taken him for the demon of the cave, dragging a human victim into his palace of darkness and terror.

Fortunately one of my knees was jammed into an interstice of the rock, while my arm was knotted, as it were, round the tree to which I clung: and I strove against the efforts of the dwarf with all the energy which the instinct of self-preservation can confer at such a moment. From time to time I drew breath with a painful effort, and shouted with all my strength, “Bug-Jargal!” but the distance, and the noise of the water-fall, left me little hope of my voice being heard.

In the mean time, the dwarf, who had not expected so much resistance, redoubled his efforts, and I began to lose strength, although the struggle did not last so long as I take to tell it. My arm was paralysed by the pressure, which had stopped the circulation; my sight grew confused; lights danced before my eyes; my ears rung; I heard the cracking and rending of the root mingle with the laugh of the monster it supported, and the roaring gulf seemed to approach me.

Before, however, giving myself utterly up to exhaustion and despair, I tried a last shout, and collecting my flying strength, uttered once more, in a cry of agony, the name of Bug-Jargal. I was answered by the bark of a dog, and turned up my eyes: Bug-Jargal and his dog were both at the brink of the opening, looking into the vault. I do not know whether he had heard my voice, or whether some uneasiness had led him back to the spot, but he saw and comprehended my danger.

“Hold on!” cried he.

“Come! come!” screamed Habibrah, foaming with rage, and collecting for a last effort the remains of his supernatural vigour. At that moment I saw,

rather than felt, my benumbed arm relax its hold. It was all over, I was sinking into the abyss, when something seized me by the back. I was in the teeth of Hero, who, at a sign from his master, had leaped down upon the platform, and his powerful jaws held me up by the collar of my coat.

Habribah had expended his whole strength in the effort, and I now collected all that remained of mine. His stiff and torn fingers at length loosed their hold; the root, which had held out so long, broke under his weight; and at the same moment when Hero drew me violently backward, the miserable dwarf disappeared in the foam of the waterfall, flinging a curse to me as he sunk, which, as I did not hear it, may be supposed to have fallen back, and descended with him into the abyss. Such was the end of my uncle's buffoon.

CHAPTER XXV

THIS terrible scene, this mad and desperate struggle, with its frightful conclusion, had completely overcome me. I lay upon the ground without strength, and almost without sense, when the voice of Bug-Jargal recalled me to myself.

“Brother,” cried he, “haste thee away from this fatal spot; the sun will set in half-an-hour! Follow Hero, and he will guide thee into the valley, where I shall await thy coming.” The words of a friend restored at once my hope, my strength, and my courage, and I rose up. The dog, who eyed my motions with the intelligence of a human being, plunged into the subterraneous avenue, guiding me by his bark through the gloom, and in a few moments I saw daylight before me. As at length we issued from the cold vault, I could not help reflecting on the prediction of the dwarf, which he had made the moment we entered—

“One only of us two will return by this path!” His attempt had failed, but his prophecy was realised.

Arrived in the valley, I saw Bug-Jargal once more, and threw myself into his arms oppressed with emotion, a thousand questions rising to my lips, yet no voice to let them forth.

“Listen!” said he. “Thy wife, my sister, is in safety. In the camp of the whites I gave up the in-

valuable treasure to the care of a relation of thine own, who commands an advanced post. I offered to surrender myself a prisoner to thy countrymen, for fear the heads of my ten comrades should be made to answer for mine. Thy relation, however, counselled me to fly, and to endeavour to stay thy execution, as on it alone depended the retaliation of the whites.

“ ‘If D’Auverney is saved,’ said he, ‘neither thou nor thy ten countrymen will suffer. Biassou, on the death of every prisoner, communicates the intelligence to the whites by hoisting a black flag on the highest peak. If that flag waves to-night, the whites will mourn D’Auverney, and revenge his death on thee or thy comrades. But thou mayst yet be in time to prevent the execution and the unfurling of the flag of death. If thou succeed in freeing him, thou wilt thyself be free.’

“ ‘Brother, I hearkened to the voice of thy relation; I set off at my utmost speed, and thanks to the guidance of Hero, found thee out in time to save both thy life and my own.’ ”

So saying, he stretched out his hand to me, and added—

“ ‘Art thou satisfied?’ ”

“ ‘Satisfied!’ ” cried I; “ shall I not be satisfied with the purest and most exalted friendship the world ever saw? Yes, my brother! the friendship of Bug-Jargal, his deeds of disinterested benevolence, will remain engraven on my heart as long as it continues to beat; and though his complexion be different from mine, and another country have given him birth, my brother he shall be. Are we not children of the same great Being, to whom colour and clime are distinctions unknown? I entreat you to leave me no more: remain with me among the whites, and I shall obtain for you a commission in the colonial army.”

He interrupted me with a fierce gesture; but suddenly checking himself—

“Do I ask thee,” said he, “to enroll thyself among us?”

I was silent; I felt I had done wrong; but he added, gaily—

“Come along!” cried he; “it is time for thee to visit Maria, and convince her of thy safety.”

This proposal answered to a call of my own heart. All my troubles were now over; the star of my happiness shone at length in the heavens, after a long season of eclipse.

“Shine on!” cried I; “shine on, and like the sun at the command of Joshua, stand still while thou shinest!”

“Ah, brother!” said Bug-Jargal, “remember thou art still on earth, where the happiness of more than a moment is a wonder.”

My excited feelings could not bear the rebuke. I made no reply, and we proceeded on our journey; Bug-Jargal leading the way, and Hero bringing up the rear.

My imagination during our journey was not idle. I pictured to myself the joyful surprise of Maria on receiving me almost from the dead. I devised schemes for our future life, and arranged, according to my own wishes, all our future destiny.

The sun had now set, and the highest rock in the valley was no longer gilded by his beams, yet a faint flash of light for a moment became visible on its summit.

Here Bug-Jargal suddenly stopped, and seizing my hand—

“Listen!” said he; and at the instant a hollow sound, like the discharge of a piece of artillery, boomed along the valley, prolonged by its thousand echoes.

“It is the signal!” said the negro chief, gloomily; “it is the discharge of a cannon, is it not?”

I nodded assent. He sprung from my side, and with the swiftness of lightning, gained the summit of a lofty rock in our vicinity. I followed him, alarmed at his motions, and wondering what they could mean. When I reached the top he was standing gazing on the distance, with his arms crossed, and a melancholy smile on his lip.

“See’st thou?” said he to me. I gazed all around, but saw nothing. He looked at me with the deepest depression visible in his countenance.

“Ah, my brother! see’st thou not?” and he pointed ominously with his hand to a particular spot, where I descried the lofty peak he had pointed out to me some hours before, still faintly illuminated by the last rays of the sun, and surmounted by a large black flag.

Bug-Jargal and I regarded each other in silence.

“What means this?” at length cried I, giving utterance to my astonishment and my fear. He was silent. I afterwards understood that Biassou, after the departure of the detachment which was to convey me to execution, had found that the hour of his march did not permit him to await its return; and he, therefore, never doubting of the certainty of my death, ordered the black flag to be unfurled, in order that it might be carried away at the breaking up of the camp.

Bug-Jargal stood with folded arms, looking with a fixed gaze on the fatal ensign, which waved mournfully in the breeze. My trepidation was such that I had no power to speak. He at length turned, with a sudden shout—

“Oh God!” cried he, “my unhappy comrades! Did’st thou hear the signal-gun? They are now leading them forth to execution?”

He seemed on the point of descending the rock.

“Stay!” cried I, in terror. His head fell upon his breast.

“I bequeath thee Hero,” said he. “He will be a faithful friend: he will conduct thee to thy wife, to whom I beg thee to remember Bug-Jargal.”

“Stay!” cried I, incapable of uttering another word.

“I cannot stay, my brother!” said he, mournfully. “I now see it was not enough to save thy life; I should also have hurried to the camp of Biassou, to prevent the hoisting of this flag of death. But it is now too late to lament. My brother, I must die; for it shall never be said of Bug-Jargal that he saved his own life at the expense of the lives of ten of his countrymen. Adieu, adieu!” He whistled some notes of an African air, and the dog, wagging his tail, appeared about to spring towards a point of the valley.

Bug-Jargal took me by the hand, at the same time forcing a smile, but the smile was a convulsion.

“Adieu!” said he again, and plunging into the trees, was in an instant out of sight.

I saw him mentally long after he had disappeared! Rooted to the ground, I continued to gaze, and pursued the spectral figure through grove and valley, and over rock and hill. Sometimes it stood upon the edge of the visible horizon, and expanded to dimensions more than human: the hero became a colossus. At length, growing more indistinct in the distance, it stood still. Shadows and darkness were around it. My heart beat; my soul sickened; a sound, I know not of what, rung in my ears, and the phantom vanished.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I WAS awakened from this trance by the violent barking of Hero, who, when he had roused my attention, sprang forward, then returned a little way, looked at me eagerly, barked, and then darted away as before. There was an energy about the animal, a force of will which I could not withstand. I was then in the condition of a lunatic who may be awed by a look; and I obeyed mechanically, with no more thought of complying than of resisting the impulse to obey.

I knew that I was going to Maria; but the thought now gave me no pleasure. An idea of terror and disaster hung about her image, and this was strangely mingled with images of love and beauty, as if the extremes of all we like and loathe were warring in my mind. The thought of going to her gave me no pleasure; yet the moral attraction was as strong as ever, and even heightened at this moment by the idea of a blind and resistless fate. I knew that I ought to be somewhere else, yet I could not tell where, nor why; and above all things, I felt that I could not go elsewhere than where I was going, or act otherwise than as I did.

Is it necessary to account for this state of mind? Is it necessary for a man to apologise for the weakness of humanity? Only think of what I had endured for the last few days. When one returns from a common journey into some hitherto unvisited place, the

varieties of land and water, hills, valleys, habitations, and human faces, are mingled for a little while, like a chaos, in his reflections. His head is giddy; he confuses, time, distance, and objects; and it is only by degrees that his mind grows calm, and the new images it had acquired, and new impressions it had received, settle into their proper places, and appear, at the call of the enchanter memory, in their natural order.

What was my journey? What were the scenes it displayed, the adventures to which it conducted? In the course of a brief space, I had been married to my first and only love, and had seen her torn from my arms by my first and only friend; I had gazed upon the murdered body of my uncle; I had listened to the roaring of the flames, and the thunder of the musketry which had consumed my property, and massacred my comrades. I had sat down, and looked upon assassination like one of the audience of a theatre; I had myself been devoted from death to death, yet could not die, even when I wished it, yet only lived by a miracle! These were the circumstances of *my* journey: its mere outward, and visible, and tangible objects.

Can you wonder, then, at the confusion of my present perception? Whatever be the consequences of that confusion, will you accuse me of weakness, or stupidity, or want of friendship, gratitude, honour, generosity? I would fain part with you on good terms. Even I feel the need of human sympathy, and yearn after the indulgent thoughts of my brothers of humanity. My story is drawing to a close (in a double sense). Harken!

As I proceeded, the last words of Bug-Jargal were repeated over and over again in my ear; but it seemed as if their meaning became more obscure than ever. The black banner, which I still saw, floating

like some ominous cloud in the distance, had announced my death; and this signal was to have been followed by the execution of him or his comrades. This execution, however, could not take place in a moment. The thunder of Biassou's signal-gun could not be answered as if by an echo. The revenge of individuals being unlawful, is rash, sudden, instantaneous; that of society, or bodies of men, is as deliberate as justice itself: it is attended by all the pomp of power and will: the array of death is made a stage procession. At present, no doubt, this could only be the case to a certain extent; for the orchestra of a camp plays in quicker time than that of a city; but still some formalities must be observed, the commanding officer must be informed, sentence pronounced, the victims released, the company of executioners turned out, the *cortège* set in motion to the roll of the drum. Then must be the drawing up on the appointed Golgotha, the preparations for firing, perhaps the confession and prayers of the prisoners; for although man rarely pardons, he has no objection to God doing so if he pleases.

All this would afford time for the arrival of my friend. And arrived—what then? Would he not save his countrymen by declaring the truth? If his word was doubted, was not the evidence at hand? Would not the sternest soldier in the army consent to wait for a few minutes, were it even for the satisfaction of his curiosity? But what, then, did Pierrot mean by sending me to Maria, instead of leading me with himself to be his witness and his preserver? What meant that strange unearthly smile which passed across his features the moment before he bade me adieu, like the light of a funeral lamp falling upon the face of the dead? The answer was obvious. Acquainted only with the savage customs of his countrymen, he conceived that the massacre of his

ten comrades would take place, not in the course of military justice, but in a burst of popular fury, on the instant the signal gun was heard, and the black banner unfurled; and the generous and high-minded negro determined not to survive the supposed dis-honour.

Somewhat re-assured by this train of reasoning, and relieved by the clearing of my mind, and the growing distinctness of my perceptions which it indicated, I continued to rush on, following my conductor till he led me to the outposts of the white camp.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INTELLIGENCE had just reached the whites of the intended movement of Biassou, and all was bustle and confusion within the lines. My appearance excited little sensation. Accustomed by this time to the hair-breadth escapes of war, and attaching little importance to a commodity so cheap as human life had become, a passing exclamation of surprise, or a hurried grasp of the hand, was all I received from my comrades, as they ran by to join their companies. So much the better. I had recollection enough to dread being seized by some of the staff, and carried before the general, to give any intelligence I might be able respecting the motions of the enemy. It was at present my sole business to seek, first Maria, and then my friend.

This arrangement may seem selfish under the circumstances. *First* Maria! But I have farther to confess that my vague fears had taken a new direction; and that, as I approached the tent, at the door of which Hero already stood baying at the pitch of his voice, I felt my limbs tremble, my mouth become parched, and my heart grow sick and faint.

Bug-Jargal, if there was any force in human reasoning, was safe; it was not in the nature of things he could be otherwise. Whence, then, was this sink-

ing of the soul I had felt ever since he left me; this consciousness of the presence of misfortune; this groping in the dark after evil, which I saw like a shadow, and felt like a horror, without being able either to grasp or distinguish it? When any part of the physical frame is disordered, we inquire into the physical causes; and the mind is in the same manner, subject to circumstances, which, spiritual themselves, act only upon spirit. We are all *superstitious*, for that is the word; we do not require the testimony of the incredulous apostle, but refer at once the mysterious malady of the soul to a moral sympathy.

I reached the door of the tent; and Hero's voice died in a low howl. She was wont to come out to meet me! I withdrew the curtain in a kind of calm desperation.

Maria was standing in the middle of the tent gazing towards the entrance; her countenance was pale, but her eyes bright; and her features expressed intense expectation. I stood still, and we looked for some time in one another's faces without speaking. She at length glided quickly but noiselessly towards me; and, putting a hand on each of my shoulders, gazed for a moment with something like incredulity, in my eyes.

“Leopold,” said she, at length, “are you indeed well? Do we meet now to part no more? Or, are you only come again to bid me farewell for ever? Tell me, for I can bear it: in what new way is your life to be lost? what new death of agony and suspense must your Maria die?”

“My love, I am restored to you! We shall live, we shall be happy.” My voice, notwithstanding, was sorrowful; and I felt that my manner was dejected, without knowing why, and without being able to help it. She kissed my hands and my lips, and we sat down in silence.

“You escaped?” she resumed; “you are quite free?”

“Quite.”

“You left no hostage behind you?”

“None.”

“You are bound by no fantastic honour? You are master of your own life?”

“I am! I am! Why these questions? why this incredulity? Let us be happy; there is nothing to prevent us.”

“Is it possible! Well, that is so strange! Had your dead body been brought in to me, I should have felt no surprise, and my heart would not have been the heavier. But away! these are fancies; I give them to the winds; you are near me; you are with me; you are *mine*, my love and my lord! Yes, let us be happy.”

I embraced her again, I felt her warm tears of thankfulness upon my cheek; and my heart seemed to warm, and melt, and gladden under their influence.

We talked no more of the past; our thoughts wandered to the future; and, her cheek close to mine, and my arms twined round her waist, we dreamed such dreams as only young lovers can know.

“And our friend?” said she, at last.

I started, and a feeling like remorse passed through my heart.

“I must go,” said I, springing from my seat.

“Go!”

“But not for long; I *must* go!”

“Whither?” said she; and the word was spoken in a tone, half of entreaty, half of womanly command, which it was impossible to resist.

“Pierrot,” said I, “fled from the camp for the purpose of saving me. He was to have been put to death as soon as the news of my execution reached

you; and, in the event of his escape, ten of his comrades were to suffer in his stead."

"What of this? He *did* save you; and he and his comrades therefore are safe."

"But, unfortunately, it was supposed in the camp of Biassou that I had perished, and the black flag was hoisted on the heights, to proclaim the execution of the prisoner. Pierrot and I saw it on our way hither."

"And he—he was in time to save his countrymen?"

"Beyond doubt; unless I could believe the impossibility of their having been butchered on the instant, like cattle."

"But if he himself carried the news of your escape, they might not believe him."

"That is the idea with which I tormented myself; but even if they had doubted, they would at least have delayed the execution till the arrival of the witness. My escape is already known in the camp."

"But why," persisted Maria, with a gesture of impatience, "why did you not accompany him; why come first to me?"

"By his own desire."

"*By his own desire!*" Oh merciful God! In what way was it expressed?"

"There is no need for alarm. Pierrot, judging, by the customs of his barbarous countrymen, imagined that the black banner would be the signal for the instantaneous massacre of his comrades; and believing his honour concerned, he determined, on finding them dead, to die by his own hand. He therefore left me, with the smile of despair on his face, sending his last remembrance to you."

"*His last remembrance to me!*"

"He would find them as yet unharmed: perhaps

not led out from prison; his story would be believed, or at least he would be himself detained till the appearance of his witness; and as my arrival is already public he is by this time safe."

"*His last remembrance to me!*" Maria seemed in a stupor; she repeated the words unconsciously; her face, her very lips, as bloodless as those of a corpse.

"What are you doing?" she cried at length, almost with a scream, as she started suddenly from her trance. "Why are you here? Will you not save him? Your preserver; your guardian angel; your noble, gallant, generous, glorious friend?"

"For God's sake, Maria, calm yourself! You know he will be saved; you know the influence our family possesses; you know his life will be ransomed, if necessary, with his weight in gold."

"Gold! Influence!" She stamped her foot with impatience; and seizing me with both hands by the breast, almost fiercely—"Oh, man! man!" cried she, "*do you not know that he loved me?* Can *his* love be like the love of other men? He preserved your life; he brought you back to your friends and your countrymen; he restored you to my arms; and, and —" Here her words were interrupted, and her bosom convulsed with passionate feeling. "What more had he to do with life? What more to enjoy? What more to suffer? What could he do but die? He is dead! He loved me, and he is dead!"

I was struck with horror and remorse. A conviction flashed through my brain, which threatened, like lightning, to illumine and destroy at the same moment; for I almost fell to the ground. The despair of Bug-Jargal was not like that of an ordinary man. I remembered that, but for me, when attacked by the alligator, he would have delivered himself up voluntarily to a death the imagination shudders at!

“Fly!” cried Maria; “stand not, for shame! Up, and be a man! There may yet be time. Preserve but his life, and reason will effect the rest. Away!”

“Is there a public place of execution? Where is it? Speak?”

“Good God! now I remember! Serjeant Thadeus left me but a few minutes before your arrival. I had not seen him since the burning of Fort Galifet, and had much to say; but he was suddenly called away to lead out a detachment to the *Bouche-du-grand-diable*, to execute some rebels; and he went off, wishing, with muttered curses, that it was their master who was to suffer instead of themselves!”

I was out of her sight in an instant, and rushing like a madman through the camp—

“The *Bouche-du-grand-diable*! Where?” It was all I could utter, from time to time; and at length, directed by the wondering soldiers, I found myself at some distance from the lines, and bounding along a track which had evidently been lately passed by a crowd of men. I remembered my own obstinate conviction of the noble negro’s baseness; I remembered that I had been only withheld by the shame of assassination from stabbing him to the heart in the camp of Biassou; and I knew that my sentiments of hate and horror had been shared by Thadeus, who, till this moment, must have remained undeceived with regard to the real character of Pierrot!

If I could but reach the summit of the hill up which I was passing before the fatal moment! The place of execution was in the valley beyond, and possibly at some distance; but I felt as if I had the strength of a giant in my lungs, and in such a cause could make my voice heard for leagues. But my heart quaked within me; every moment I dreaded to hear the sound of musketry; the distant bark of a dog almost struck me dead with terror.

Not a shot! not a shot! The evening was still and clear. If the execution was over, I must ere now have met the detachment on its return. All was safe.

I was on the summit of the hill. The valley beyond was small; and in the middle there was a grove, beyond which, far enough to leave my sight uninterrupted by the trees, stood the cortege of death. I shouted as I ran, although I was evidently too distant to be heard. I continued, notwithstanding, to shout so loudly that at length my hoarse voice was hardly louder than a groan. The executioners, however, stood with their faces towards me, and I should probably be recognised. I could myself already recognise Thadeus at the head of his men, who were drawn up in line; but, alas! was there not danger if I was noticed at all, of my being taken merely for some one attracted by curiosity to the spot?

But the prisoners? they were the ten negroes! In my confusion, I was not for some moments aware of this fact; but when I was so, I felt a horrid sensation of joy run through my blood; of joy, at the idea of ten men being murdered instead of one! My exertions, however, did not slacken; I continued to run wildly on, sometimes forcing from my aching breast a faint hoarse shout, and sometimes waving a handkerchief round my head.

At length a stir, a change of some kind took place among the group of blacks. An eleventh man was added to their number, and the rest were striking their foreheads upon the ground. It was Bug-Jargal! He waved them majestically away, and they retired far a moment; but returning, clung round his knees, and bent their faces to the earth. They seemed to crave something as a boon, and to struggle as vehemently as their almost idolatrous veneration permitted; but his gestures were absolute; Thadeus waved his

sword threateningly; they retired; and I heard the words "Make ready!"

At that moment I entered the little grove. It was but a dozen bounds from side to side, but within that small dark space there was a whole hell of torment. I saw nothing; heard nothing: my voice burst forth in unconnected and discordant shrieks.

"Thadeus! Thadeus! Help! Hold, for thy life! Murder! murder!" and just as I had nearly gained the opposite side, I was answered by a volley of musketry, and fell senseless on the ground.

When I awoke, I had no distinct recollection of what had happened; but the next moment I felt an acute pain in my arm, and saw that the coat-sleeve was torn and moistened. I then knew that I had been wounded, and raised my eyes with a sickening feeling of expectation. Pierrot was leaning over me, the blood welling from his naked bosom, and the films of death gathering in his eye.

"Thou art not slain!" said he. "Oh my brother! thou wilt live! Thank God! thank God! She would weep so much!" His voice sunk to a whisper, and yet he appeared to wish to say something more. With a bursting heart, I clasped him tenderly in my arms, and placed my ear to his lips, that I might hear his last words. It came in a faint, soft murmur: "*Maria!*" said he; and the soul of the gallant negro escaped with the sound.

* * * *

Need I add that Maria, now an angel in heaven, was right; and that Bug-Jargal had gone there to die? He never hinted to Thadeus that I had escaped; and the faithful serjeant, although, in spite of himself, troubled to the soul at the scene, believed that he was not only doing his duty as a soldier, but re-

venging the wrongs of his deceased friend. The Slave-King, with great difficulty prevailed upon his countrymen to accept of the exchange he offered, of his life for theirs; but he could not altogether repress the devotion of his dog, who sprung from the arm of him who held him, in time to have his leg broken by one of the balls which slew his master.

Maria's health and spirits had received too severe a shock by these occurrences to be remedied by the art of the physician. I saw my young bride wither away before my eyes; and in a little, a very little while, carried the truest and fondest of wives to the tomb.

The reader, perhaps, requires to be reminded that the above narrative was told by Lieutenant d'Auverney to his comrades, on the evening before a general engagement. The battle was fought and won; the captain was slain while leading the forlorn hope in carrying a redoubt, and Serjeant Thadeus and the negro's dog were both found dead beside him.

NOTE.

[In the original, the narrative of Captain d'Auverney ends with the disappearance of Bug-Jargal when the signal-gun is heard, and the black banner seen unfurled. Serjeant Thadeus then takes up the tale, describes shortly the death of the negro-chief, and the history ends abruptly. There is added, however, the following in the form of a note.]

READERS in general eagerly seek the removal of the veil which sometimes hangs over the personages in whom an author has succeeded, or at least striven to succeed, in exciting an interest in their hearts. According to custom, then, some persons may now be striving, and striving in vain, to conjecture the ultimate destiny of the characters with whom in the preceding narrative, they have been made acquainted, and we think we hear the query, "what became of Captain d'Auverney, his serjeant, and his dog?"

The reader has perceived, that the dark melancholy of Captain d'Auverney proceeded from a double cause: the death of his magnanimous friend, Bug-Jargal, or Pierrot, and the loss of his beloved Maria, who was saved from the fire of Fort Galifet, only to perish soon after in the first burning of the Cape.

With regard to D'Auverney himself, we shall tell all we have been able to discover about him.

On the day following a decided victory, gained by the troops of the French republic over the army of all Europe, the general of division, M——, who was invested with the chief command, was alone in his tent, engaged in drawing up, from the notes of the chief officer of his staff, the report on the recent victory, which was to be sent to the national convention. While thus engaged, an aid-de-camp came to tell him that the representative of the people, dispatched to him by the republic, demanded an audience.

The general abhorred such ambassadors, sent by the Mountain to the camps to degrade and decimate them: suborned informers, let loose by the hangman against honour. However, he deemed it impolitic to refuse the request, especially after a victory.

The Moloch of these times of blood loved illustrious victims, and the high priests of the revolution rejoiced when they could at a single blow overthrow a head and a crown, were it only of thorns, like that of Louis XVI.; or of flowers, like that of the young maids of Verdun, or of laurels, like that of Custine and André Chénier. The representative, therefore, was introduced, according to permission, into the presence of the general.

After some ambiguous and constrained congratulations upon the recent triumph of the republican armies, the representative drew near the general.

“But that is not enough, citizen-general,” said he, in a half whisper; “enemies from without are less to be dreaded than enemies within: it is not sufficient to vanquish the former, it is necessary also to exterminate the latter.”

“What do you mean, citizen-representative?” said the astonished general.

“There is a captain in your army,” replied the

commissioner of the convention, with a look of mystery, "called Leopold d'Auverney, who serves in the thirty-second half-brigade; do you know him, general?"

"That I do, indeed: I know that the thirty-second was highly favoured in having him for their captain; and at this moment I have been reading a report of the adjutant-general, chief of the brigade in which he is concerned."

"What, citizen-general! was it your intention to have given him another step?"

"I shall not deny, citizen-representative, that such was my intention; but ——"

"You are blinded by victory, General M——," impetuously interrupted the commissioner; "but beware what you do and what you say; beware of cherishing serpents in your bosom, lest when the people rise up to crush their enemies they crush you with them. This Leopold d'Auverney is an aristocrat, a counter-revolutionist, a regalist, a *feuillant*, a *Girondin*. Public justice demands him! He must be delivered into my hands this very hour!"

"It is impossible," replied the general calmly.

"How! what! impossible!" exclaimed the commissioner, with a heightening passion; "are you aware, sir, that here my power alone is supreme? The republic commands you, and you say, 'Impossible!' but in consideration of your late success, I shall read to you the note relative to D'Auverney, which I have received, and which I mean to send with him to the public accuser. It is an extract from a list of names, which I trust you will not force me to close with yours. Listen.

"Leopold Auverney (*ci-devant De*) captain of the thirty-second half-brigade, guilty: *primo*, of having related in a conventicle of conspirators, a pretended counter-revolutionary history, tending to ridi-

rule the principle of equality and liberty, and to exalt the old superstitions, known by the names of *royalty* and *religion*.

“‘ *Secundo*, of having used expressions repugnant to all good *sans culottes*, in characterizing different memorable events, especially the enfranchisement of the *ci-devant* blacks of St. Domingo.

“‘ *Tertio*, of having uniformly used the word *monsieur*, and never *citizen*, in his recital.

“‘ *And, quarto*, of having, in the said recital, openly conspired for the overturn of the government in favour of the factions of Girondin and Brissotists. He is worthy of death.’

“Well, general, what have you to say to this? Will you still protect this traitor? Will you still hesitate to deliver up to justice this enemy of the country?”

“This enemy of the country,” replied the general, with dignity, “has sacrificed himself for it. With regard to the extract from your report, I shall reply to it by one from mine. Listen in your turn.

“Leopold d’Auverney, captain in the thirty-second half-brigade, decided this new victory won by our arms. A formidable redoubt had been established by the allied forces: it was the day of the battle, and it must be carried, although the death of him who first approached it was certain. Captain d’Auverney devoted himself to the duty: he attacked the redoubt, carried it, and was killed in the victory. The bodies of Serjeant Thadeus, of the thirty-second, and of a dog were found near him. We propose to the national convention to decree that Captain Leopold d’Auverney has deserved well of his country.”

“You see,” continued the general calmly, the difference in our missions. We both send lists to the national convention, and in these lists is found the same name. You denounce it as the name of a traitor,

I proclaim it as that of a hero. You consign it to ignominy, I to glory. You erect a scaffold, I a trophy. Well, each to his part. It is fortunate, however, for this same man, that he has escaped, in battle, the punishment which you had in reserve for him. God be praised, he whom you wished to kill is dead! He did not wait."

The commissary, furious at seeing his conspiracy vanished with his conspirator, muttered between his teeth, "Dead! what a pity!"

The general overheard him.

"There is still a resource," said he, indignantly, "still one resource left, citizen-representative of the people! Go, seek the body of D'Auverney among the ruins of the redoubt. Who knows but that the cannon of the enemy may have spared his head for the national guillotine?"

THE END.

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